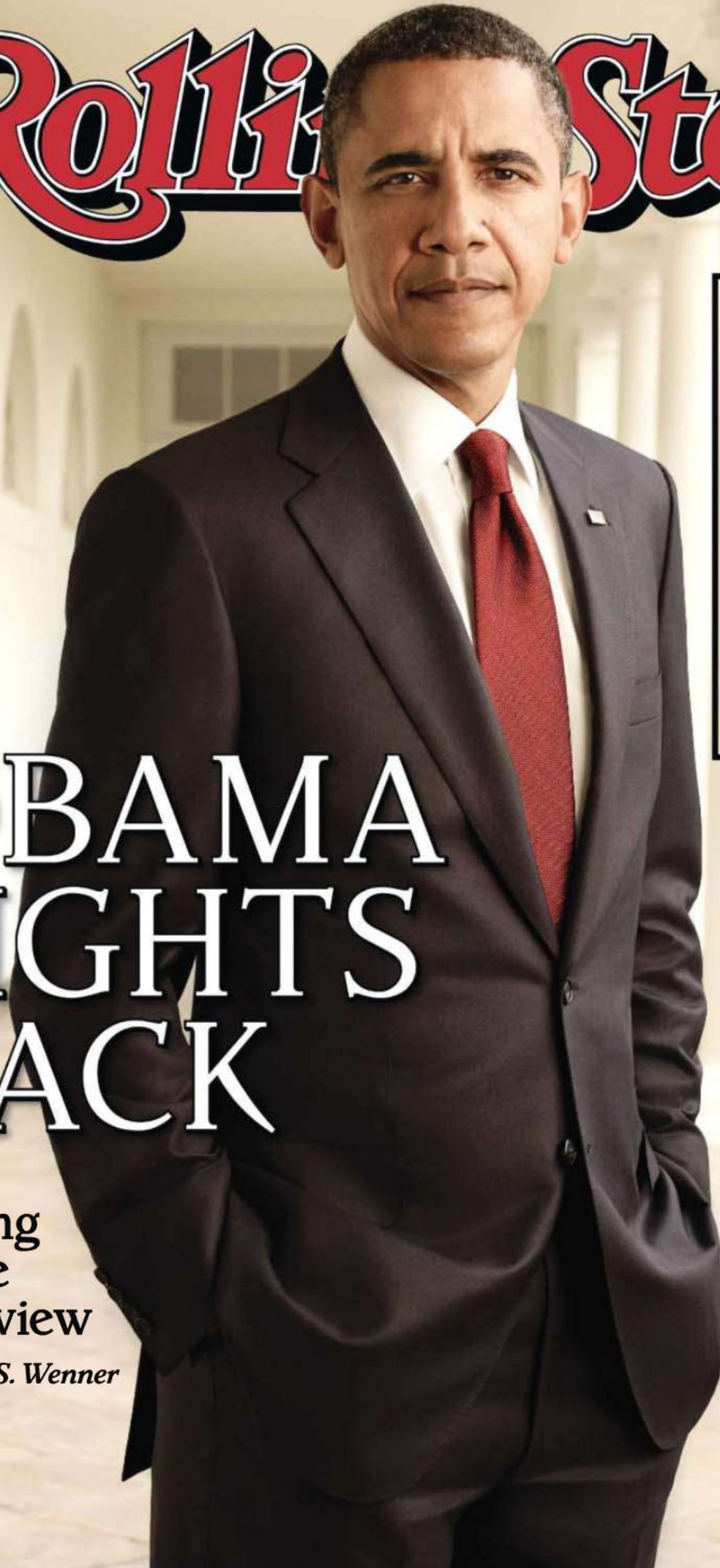


# Rolling Stone

A full-length portrait of Barack Obama standing in a hallway with white columns. He is wearing a dark suit, a white shirt, and a red tie. He has his hands in his pockets and is looking directly at the camera with a slight smile.

Issue 1115 >> October 14, 2010 >> \$4.99  
rollingstone.com

## THE HOT LIST 2010

WHAT'S NEW  
WHAT'S NEXT  
WHAT'S NUTS

# OBAMA FIGHTS BACK

The  
Rolling  
Stone  
Interview

By Jann S. Wenner

## THE TRUTH ABOUT THE TEA PARTY

By Matt Taibbi

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Musician Lucinda Williams  
Photographed by Danny Clinch



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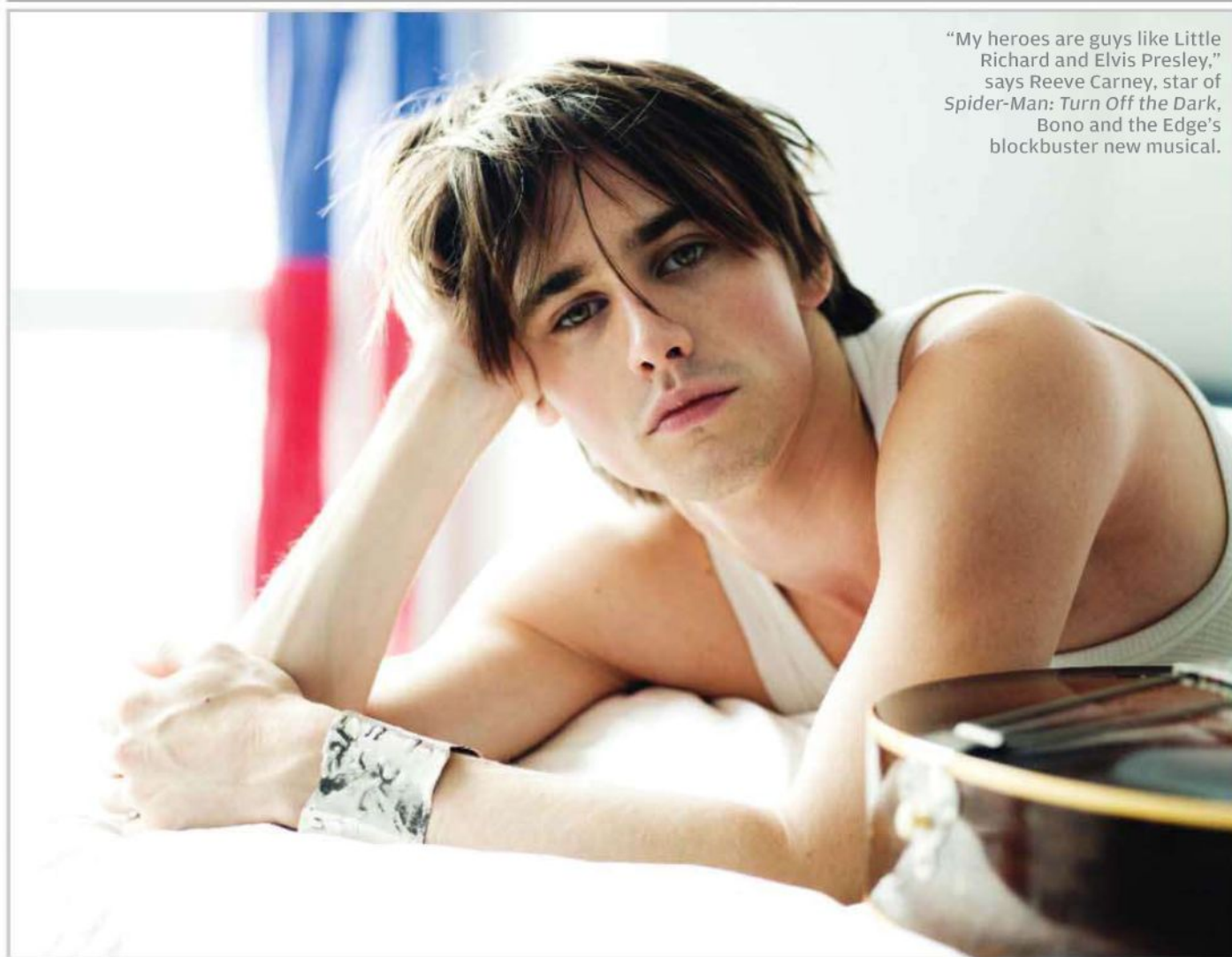


# *The* HOT LIST

*RS1115*  
*"All the News  
That Fits"*

*The  
Beautiful  
Bad Girl*





"My heroes are guys like Little Richard and Elvis Presley," says Reeve Carney, star of *Spider-Man: Turn Off the Dark*, Bono and the Edge's blockbuster new musical.

## FEATURES

### Obama in Command

In an Oval Office interview, the president discusses the Tea Party, the war, the economy and what's at stake in November. *By JANN S. WENNER*

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### Tea & Crackers

How corporate interests and Republican insiders hijacked the Tea Party movement. *By MATT TAIBBI*

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### The One and Only Hot List 2010

The hottest in actresses and models, movies and marijuana scientists.

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How the MC got back on top. *Page 15*

### FOOTBALL

#### Meltdown in Dallas

Talking heads won't shut up about the Cowboys' and Vikings' struggles.

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#### Clapton: Deeper Than the Blues

The guitar god's most personal series of covers yet. *Page 95*

### MOVIES

#### The Film of the Year

*The Social Network* turns the story of Facebook into spectacular drama – and defines a generation. *Page 104*

### On the Cover

President Barack Obama photographed at the White House, Washington, D.C., September 17th, 2010, by **Mark Seliger**.

Photograph by PETER YANG



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# Correspondence

## { Love Letters & Advice }



### Television's Best

I THOUGHT THIS YEAR'S covers couldn't get any better than Lady Gaga, Katy Perry and *True Blood*. But this was easily the best *Mad Men* picture I've ever seen.

Dan Gibson, Centreville, VA

IT'S NICE TO SEE THE CAST of *Mad Men* bring some class back to the cover of RS after a summer filled with Gaga's ass, Perry's tits and *True Blood*'s naked orgy. Then again, I'm not gonna lie – the T&A of Perry and Gaga was pretty spectacular.

John Murphy, Wayne, NJ

YOUR INSIGHTFUL COVER story on the brilliance that is *Mad Men* ["A Fine Madness," RS 1113] reminded me that there do exist compelling television characters who aren't named Snooki and the Situa-

tion. It's time that names like Don Draper, Joan Holloway and Roger Sterling became part of the vernacular.

Audrey Stewart, via the Internet

THANK YOU FOR THE BEST article about *Mad Men* that I've ever read. Of all the many pieces written about the show, your story tops them all.

Daniel Lippman  
Great Barrington, MA

ALL I CAN SAY IS THANK God for *Mad Men*! I loved reading about the cast of TV underdogs outdoing everyone, and I especially loved Jon Hamm – he seems so down-to-earth, and it's nice to see a fellow Midwesterner doing well in showbiz.

Dani La Londe, Lenexa, KS

HAS ANYONE ELSE NOTICED that it's been a while since ROLLING STONE put a band on the cover? Is this still a rock & roll magazine or *TV Guide*?

Jerry Soberano, via the Internet

The editors reply: Keith and Mick in May? Gaga in July? Roger Waters last issue? Check your local listings.

### SNL's Genius

THANKS FOR RICH COHEN'S excellent unveiling of the brilliant master of ceremonies of *Saturday Night Live*, Lorne Michaels ["The Godfather of

Studio 8H," RS 1113]. Cohen's sharp insights into this genius of late-night comedy tell us how little we really know Michaels – and the pride he must take in being midwife to many of the great comedic stars of the last two generations.

Mike Lunny  
Whitby, Ontario

I SHUDDER TO THINK WHAT the comedy landscape would be today if Johnny Carson didn't want more vacation time and Michaels wasn't the nexus of unleashing supernovas like Dan Aykroyd, John Belushi and Bill Murray on America.

Carlton Salter, Trussville, AL

**"I thought this year's covers couldn't get any better. But this was easily the best 'Mad Men' picture I've ever seen."**

### Trash Mouth

FOR THE LOVE OF VODKA and all things unholy, thanks for giving me a bite of Chelsea Handler ["Dirty Slutty Funny," RS 1113]. She's the only reason I stay up past 9 p.m.

Jillian Burgess-Bogy  
Wabbaseka, AR

I FOUND IT UNBELIEV- ably annoying that Erik Hedegaard's article on Handler stressed that she must make for a difficult girlfriend – being

so loud and everything. It's not like the article on *Mad Men* was saying, "Matthew Weiner's a talent, sure. But can you imagine him as a husband? So neurotic..."

Bash Doran, via the Internet

### Glee's Finest

RS SHOULD GIVE ITSELF A pat on the back for choosing *Glee*'s porcelain-faced Kurt Hummel as one of the best characters on TV ["The Choir Boy," RS 1113]. The shot of actor Chris Colfer surrounded by a bevy of leather-clad male admirers has to be one of the cleverest photos I've seen in RS in a long time.

Isabel Wright  
Via the Internet

### NFL's God Squad

FOR SOMEONE WHO PRO- fesses to be so tolerant and progressive, Matt Taibbi seems to direct an inordinate

amount of heat at Christianity ["Look Out for Tebow," RS 1113]. Statements like "Tim Tebow's hyper-Christian, aw-shucks persona is not easy to like" betray Taibbi's deep-seated intolerance toward Christian beliefs. The fact that a sizable percentage of the mainstream Christian church peddles veiled hate politics does not excuse Taibbi's remarks.

Jeff Sistrunk, Sparta, NJ

Taibbi responds: Tebow's support of *Focus on the Family*, a group that espouses exactly the kind of virulently anti-gay, hate-filled messages you refer to, has no place on the football field. Besides, when did I ever claim to be tolerant?

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## And the Winner Is . . . The 2010 ROLLING STONE College Journalism Award

WE ARE PROUD TO ANNOUNCE the winner of the 35th Annual ROLLING STONE College Journalism Award. Kansas State senior Jason Miller's profile of one college student's attempt to find peace after undergoing torturous procedures to "cure" his homosexuality reads like the tale of a prisoner at Guantánamo. Miller's account of the young man's "conversion therapy" – in-



cluding exposure to extreme heat and electric shocks – led off a five-part series in the *Kansas State Collegian* on the local gay community. "Most people don't know programs like this exist," says Miller. "A lot of people thanked us." The response was unprecedented: "We got more hits in three days than in the history of the paper's website," says Miller, now the *Collegian*'s editor in chief.



A dramatic scene of a massive tornado tearing through a town, viewed through a broken brick wall. Debris is flying through the air, and the sky is dark and stormy. The perspective is from inside a building, looking out through a large opening in the brick wall.

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## The President Speaks

Hear audio excerpts from this issue's interview by Jann S. Wenner with President Barack Obama – including what happened when Bob Dylan and Paul McCartney performed at the White House. Plus: Read our two earlier conversations with the president, and see his life in photos.



Weezer

## Fall Concert Coverage

Backstage reports, video coverage and full reviews of the season's biggest shows and festivals: Austin City Limits, Muse, Phish, Weezer and Mator Records' 21st-anniversary blowout in Las Vegas. Plus: Willie Nelson, Belle and Sebastian, and many others.

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### REVIEWS

New albums and singles evaluated every Tuesday

### GALLERIES

A history of actors playing rock stars, from *Sid and Nancy* to *Nowhere Boy*

### VIDEO

ROLLING STONE's Peter Travers interviews Chloë Grace Moretz, from *Let Me In*.

### FROM THE ARCHIVES

"The Battle for Facebook": The RS exposé that anticipated *The Social Network*

### PLAYBACK

A song-by-song breakdown of *Glee*, every Wednesday

### BLOGS

Matt Taibbi on politics, David Fricke on music and Rob Sheffield on pop culture

### RANDOM NOTES

Rock's hottest photos, updated daily

Glee's Charice



Mark Zuckerberg of Facebook

Nowhere Boy's Aaron Johnson as John Lennon



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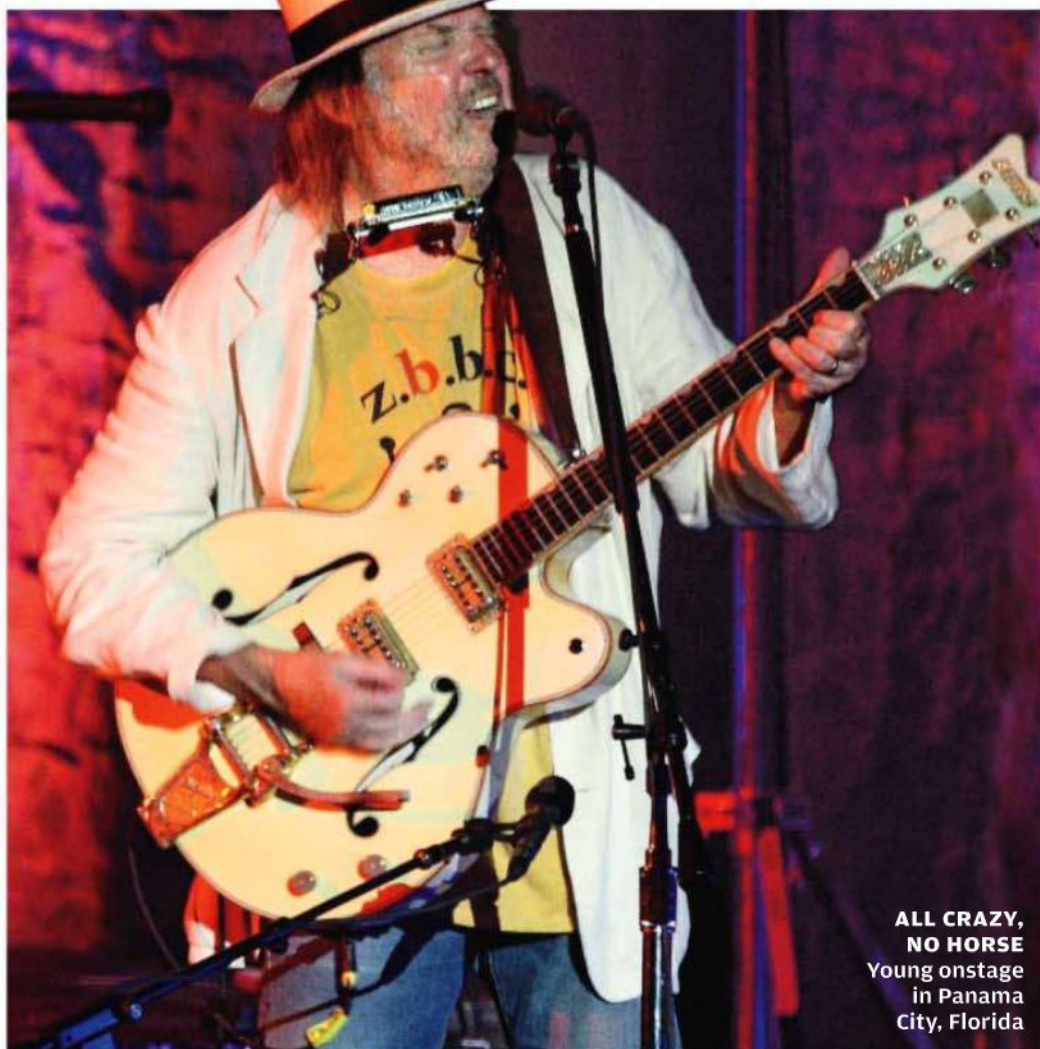
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# Rock & Roll



**ALL CRAZY,  
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Young onstage  
in Panama  
City, Florida

## Neil Young Plugs in, Digs Deep With 'Le Noise'

**Inside Young's intimate solo LP. Plus: Buffalo Springfield return**  
By Andy Greene

**O**VER HIS 50-YEAR career, Neil Young has dipped into everything from rockabilly to feedback-laden rock, from country to New Wave. But until now, Young had never recorded an album entirely on his own – without any backing musicians. Produced by Daniel Lanois,

Young's new album, *Le Noise*, features nothing but his voice and guitar. "It's been so freeing for me," Young says. "I didn't have to show [the songs] to anybody or teach anybody how to play them. You don't know how big that is for me."

The idea for the project was planted 15 years ago, as Young's longtime producer, David Briggs, was close to death. "Near the end of his life, I asked him, 'What would you like to tell me? What's my direction?'"

says Young, who worked with Briggs on 16 albums, including *Rust Never Sleeps* and *After the Gold Rush*. "He said, 'It's pretty straight-ahead – you just gotta get closer to yourself. The less things in the way of you, the better off you're gonna be.'"

Since Briggs' death in 1995, Young hasn't worked with a true collaborative producer – until he called up Lanois earlier this year. "He's the first guy I've ever met that can step into Briggs' shoes," [Cont. on 16]

## How Eminem Got Back on Top

**Inside the MC's massive comeback**  
By Evan Serpick

**L**ESS THAN FOUR months after its release, Eminem's seventh album, *Recovery*, has already sold 2.6 million copies, reigniting his career. What's the key to Eminem's latest success? Women.

The record's second single, "Love the Way You Lie," has crossed over to pop and R&B radio, and is connecting strongly with women. "He felt like he missed the female audience last time," says the rapper's manager, Paul Rosenberg. "He wanted to push in that direction to make sure that he didn't isolate anybody." The strategy is working: "Love the Way You Lie," a wrenching narrative of a dysfunctional relationship, featuring a bittersweet chorus by Rihanna, has spent seven weeks atop the Hot 100. "People have an emotional attachment to that song," says Terry Monday of Oklahoma City hip-hop station Power 103.5. "There's a lot of truth there – the turmoil he's been through, how he feels. He's a master storyteller."

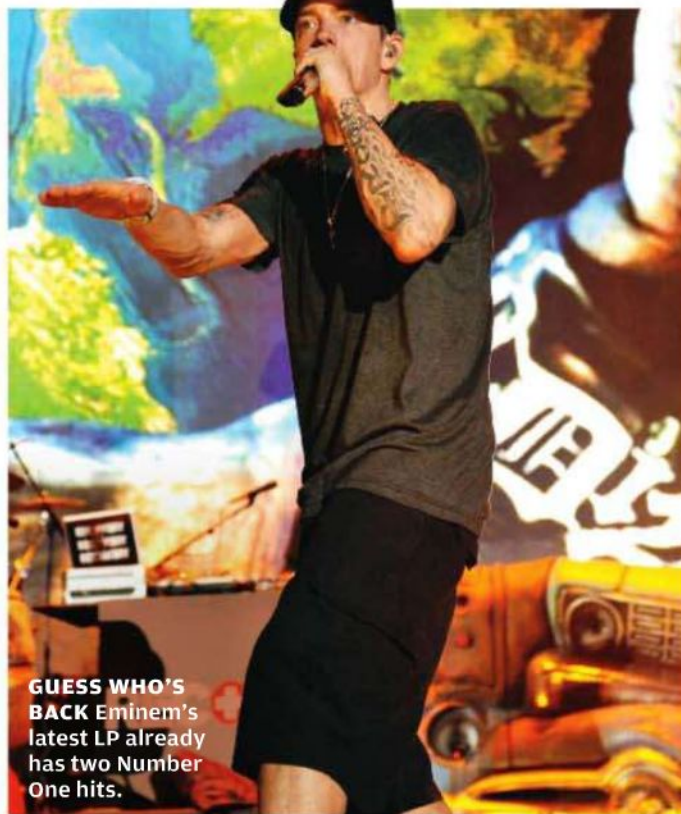
To contrast the dark, twisted mood of 2009's comeback LP, *Relapse*, Eminem reached out to a new batch of producers for *Recovery*, focusing on anthemic tunes that sound more like hard rock or emo than typical hip-hop. The



lead single, "Not Afraid," has a triumphant, Linkin Park-style melody, and "Won't Back Down" and the Black Sabbath-sampling "Going Through Changes" mix in heavy guitars and live-sounding drums. "He said he wanted a classic-rock feel," says producer Emile, who worked on "Going Through Changes." "He wanted familiarity and a big, epic sound."

"Love the Way You Lie" almost didn't make it on the record. A week before the album was due to his label, Interscope, Eminem latched on to a beat by Alex Da Kid, the British producer behind B.o.B's hit "Airplanes." The acoustic-guitar-driven track inspired Eminem to write about a tumultuous couple – with lyrics drawn from his relationship with ex-wife Kim. Rihanna was the MC's first choice to sing the hook, knowing that her own history with ex-boyfriend Chris Brown would give the chorus – "Just gonna stand there and watch me burn/But that's all right, because I like the way it hurts" – deeper resonance. Alex Da Kid and Eminem recorded the song over a weekend in Detroit, and Rihanna cut her vocals from abroad.

The label was still pushing "Not Afraid" (which also hit Number One) when *Recovery* came out on June 21st, but almost immediately, radio stations began abandoning it to



**GUESS WHO'S BACK** Eminem's latest LP already has two Number One hits.

play "Love the Way You Lie." "There was a sense of urgency with people wanting to hear it," says Rosenberg, who scrambled to get the label to release the single and shoot a video. "You never fight a hit."

Eminem carried the triumphant vibe into four sold-out stadium concerts he co-headlined last month with Jay-Z in Detroit and New York – which grossed more than \$15 million. With the momentum of

a monster single behind them, Rosenberg hopes Eminem will mount a more extensive tour. "I wish I could say there were more shows scheduled," he says, adding that Eminem is currently in the studio with Dr. Dre, finishing his mentor's long-delayed album, *Detox*. "He felt great about the gigs, and hopefully that will push him toward doing more – but we'll see if he has the appetite for that."

## NEIL YOUNG

[Cont. from 15] says Young. "Better late than never."

Lanois was thrilled to get the call. "I've always wanted to work with Neil," he says. "But he never called! I figured he didn't need me to make a Crazy Horse record."

Lanois and Young cut the record in three three-day sessions – scheduled around the full-moon cycle, a career-long habit of Young's – in an L.A. mansion. The songs were originally acoustic but transformed in the studio. "I started trying them electric, and it began to grow," says Young. "It's like nothing I've done before. It's folk, but also metal, Jimi Hendrix, Woody Guthrie, psychedelic."

*Le Noise* kicks off with a towering power chord, and most of

the tracks feature Young's Crazy Horse-style playing mixed with electronic echoes, trippy loops and sonic tweaks from Lanois. They also feature some of Young's most personal lyrics in years. "Love and War" chronicles his long history of writing "songs about love and songs about war since the back streets of Toronto." "Hitchhiker" tells Young's entire life story, including a laundry list of drugs he's ingested over the years. "I wrote that in '75 or '76 but never finished it," says Young. "It's everything you shouldn't know."

Young hasn't had a hit album in well over a decade, but his label, Reprise, is pushing *Le Noise* with an aggressive digital marketing strategy, including iPad and iPhone apps based on the record. "Neil's totally embracing the whole app land-

scape," says Reprise marketing executive Peter Standish.

Young has no plans to support the record with a tour, but at this year's Bridge School Benefit charity concert he's going to reunite with the surviving members of Buffalo Springfield – Stephen Stills and Richie Furay – for their first concert since their breakup in 1968. "A few weeks ago, Neil texted me and asked if I'd be willing to do it," says Furay. "Our lives have gone in different directions, and I wouldn't say that we're close friends, but this is for a good cause. We're just doing these two shows, so everybody who gets a chance to come will be like, 'Wow, I heard a little bit of history here.'"

*Additional reporting by Cameron Crowe*

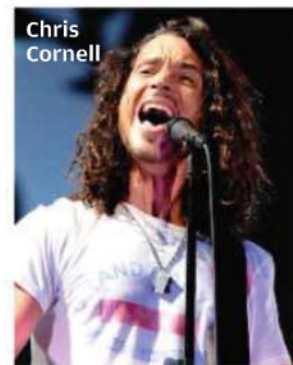
## IN THE NEWS

### Bon Jovi, Alice Cooper Lead Hall of Fame Ballot

The ballot for the 2011 Rock and Roll Hall of Fame includes first-time nominees **Bon Jovi**, **J. Geils Band**, **Alice Cooper**, **Tom Waits**, **Donovan** and **Neil Diamond**. Other artists on the ballot are previously nominated acts **LL Cool J**, **Beastie Boys**, **Donna Summer**, **Chic**, **Dr. John**, **Laura Nyro**, **Joe Tex**, **Darlene Love** and **Chuck Willis**. The top vote-getters will be inducted on March 14th in New York.

### Soundgarden Reunion Heats Up

A week before **Soundgarden** released their best-of anthology, *Telephantasm*, the album had gone platinum. That's because the record was packaged with *Guitar Hero: Warriors of Rock*, and Activision pre-ordered a million copies. "It's a new way to get our records out there," says drummer **Matt Cameron**. After a reunion at Lollapalooza, the band is ramping up future plans, which may feature a tour next year and more reissues, including a live album. New music is also a possibility. "I'd love to get together in the studio again," says Cameron. "Everyone focused on Pearl Jam and Nirvana. We want to reclaim some of that."



### R.E.M. Complete New Album

**R.E.M.** have finished recording their 15th studio LP. Produced by Jackknife Lee – who worked on 2008's *Accelerate* – the LP is due next spring and was cut in New Orleans, Nashville and Berlin. "You would be hard-pressed to find three more musical and inspiring places to work," the band wrote on its website.





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# Lennon's 70th Birthday Marked by Reissues, Concerts, Movies

New biopic, documentary and remasters of solo albums due this fall

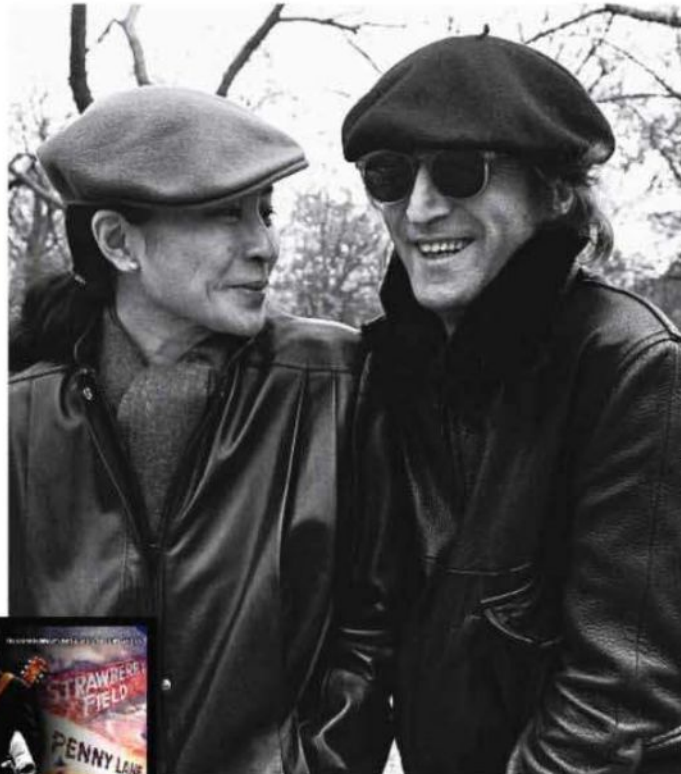
ON OCTOBER 9TH, JOHN Lennon would have been 70 years old – and at first, Yoko Ono herself didn't realize the significance of that date. "I don't think about age so much," she says. "But I was getting messages from all corners of the world. I said, 'What is going on here?' It seems like with 70, there's an explosion." Over the next two months, Lennon's birthday will be commemorated with reissues, a new documentary, special concerts and a biopic. "[People] want some of John's energy, power and conviction," says Ono. Here are some of the highlights of the Lennon celebrations:

## Lennon solo reissues

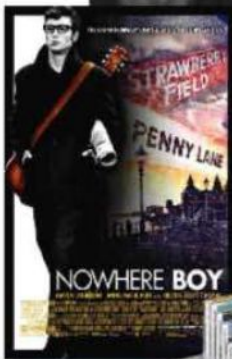
In the tradition of last year's Beatles reissues, Lennon's entire solo catalog – eight albums in total – has been remastered from the original tapes. For Ono, who worked with Abbey Road engineer Paul Hicks, the experience was unexpectedly difficult: "Listening to John's songs is usually routine for me. But this was emotionally hard." *Double Fantasy* will be packaged with a *Stripped Down* edition, which brings Lennon's vocals higher in the mix. "John's voice is right up there, and it's so beautiful," Ono says. "His diction was unique. It's like listening to a Shakespearean actor."

## Ono in Iceland

On Lennon's actual birthday, Ono will preside over the annual lighting of the Imagine Peace Tower – 15 searchlights beamed into the sky – in Iceland. She'll also present Lennon Ono Grant for Peace awards to four recipients – authors Michael Pollan and Alice Walker, public-health advocate Barbara Kowalczyk and documentary filmmaker Josh Fox. And she'll perform with the current incarnation of the Plastic Ono Band. Why is



**IN HIS LIFE** Ono and Lennon in Central Park a few weeks before his death. The film *Nowhere Boy* chronicles Lennon's adolescence (left). The *Signature Box* (below) compiles eight solo albums.



Ono bringing her personal celebration to the tiny Scandinavian country? "[Iceland] is the furthest north on the map," she said. "And it's a very good position to communicate with the whole world."

## 'LennonNYC' documentary

This 112-minute film – which will debut on PBS November 22nd – focuses exclusively on the time Lennon and Ono lived in New York, from 1971 until Lennon's death in 1980. "The city offered him a chance to disconnect from the shackles of the Beatles," says director Michael Epstein. Using never-before-seen live footage and home videos – along with new interviews with Ono and Lennon's friends – the film explores the

ups and downs of the singer's final decade, including his depression after the critical drubbing of his *Some Time in New York City* LP, his "Lost Weekend" in L.A. and the creation of *Double Fantasy*. "It's 'Gimme Some Truth,' as John put it, so it's fine," Ono says. "Let it all hang out."

## 'Nowhere Boy' movie

This U.K. independent movie takes an unexpected direction – it's a Lennon biopic that focuses solely on his teenage years in Liverpool. Using the memoir of Lennon's half sister as a guideline, the drama focuses on the relationship between the future Beatle, his guardian, Aunt Mimi, and his free-spirited mother, Julia – who abandoned him at age four and then reappeared when Lennon was 15. "It's a love triangle that happens to be about John Lennon," says director Sam Taylor-Wood. "There were two strong women then – and that played out throughout his life."

DAVID BROWNE

## IN BRIEF

■ **Steven Tyler** and **Jennifer Lopez** are joining **Randy Jackson** as judges on the 10th season of *American Idol*. "If you don't like what I say, don't get mad – get better," said Tyler. In addition, Interscope Geffen A&M Records' chairman **Jimmy Iovine** will serve as the show's "in-house mentor."

■ **Sacha Baron Cohen** has signed on to portray late **Queen** frontman **Freddie Mercury** in a biopic that's scheduled to begin production in 2011.

■ A deluxe, remastered reissue of **Paul McCartney and Wings'** 1973 LP *Band on the Run* is due November 2nd. It will include bonus material and previously unseen footage of the group at work.

■ **Green Day** producer **Rob Cavallo** will take over as chairman of Warner Bros. Records. "My number-one focus will be artist development and record-making," says Cavallo.

■ **Eric Clapton** is staging a world tour next year that will run through Asia, the U.K. and North America.

■ **Weezer's** Memories Tour, which kicks off November 26th in L.A., will feature the band playing 1994's *Blue Album* and 1996's *Pinkerton* in their entirety on consecutive nights.

■ After an onstage meltdown by frontman **Scott Weiland** in Houston on September 19th – "I started drinking again, I got divorced, and my whole world spun around," he said – **Stone Temple Pilots** pushed back 12 shows to mid-October.

■ **Shania Twain** will discuss her rise to fame and her divorce from producer **Robert "Mutt" Lange** in an autobiography due next spring.

■ A Georgia jury awarded \$40,000 in damages to a man who testified that **Kid Rock** and five members of his entourage beat him up in a 2007 brawl at a Waffle House restaurant.

■ **George Michael** was sentenced to eight weeks in jail after pleading guilty to marijuana possession and driving under the influence. The singer was arrested after he drove his car into a London photo shop in July.



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# PERFORMANCE

## Older, Better, Faster, Tighter: Pavement's Energetic Return

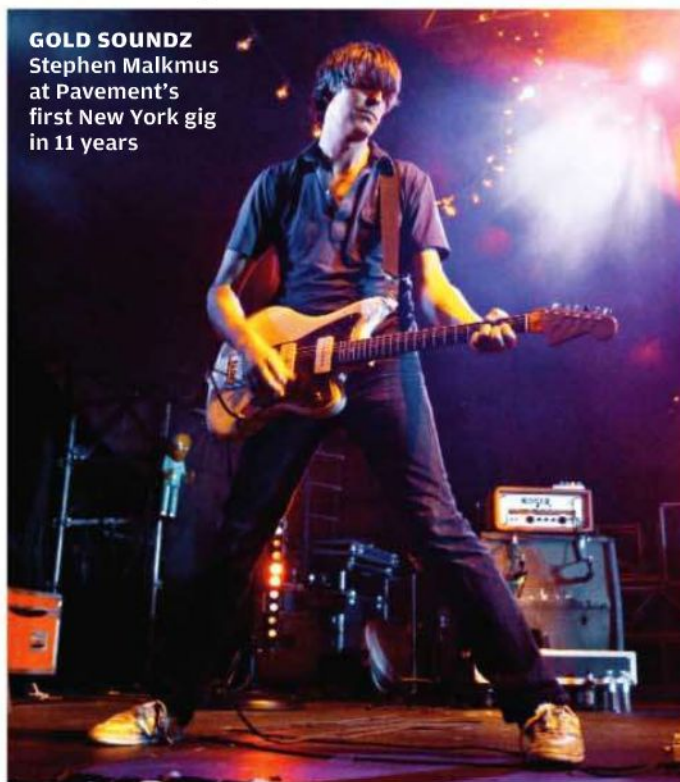


Williamsburg Waterfront,  
September 19th, Brooklyn

**S**ING IT IF YOU KNOW it," Pavement's Stephen Malkmus told a 5,000-strong Brooklyn crowd as the band prepared to play "Stop Breathin'." Then he added, "I tell myself that before every song: 'Sing it like you know it! Be the ball! Be the snare, Steve!'" He didn't need to worry. Not only did Malkmus remember all the words to the old Pavement songs, he and the group brought new flair to them. In their first New York gig since 1999, the Nineties indie princes buzzed through their fat songbook, 27 brilliant tunes in 90 minutes, without letting the energy flag, lurching into each with boyish enthusiasm.

On their first tour in 11 years, Pavement have done the reunion thing in the least embarrassing way possible: no new songs, no pompous gestures, just a celebration of the catalog that made them the great guitar band of the Nineties. The set hopped from songs everybody likes ("Gold Soundz," "Summer Babe") to songs practically nobody ever notices ("Fin," "Starlings of the Slipstream"), dipping into psych-

**GOLD SOUNDZ**  
Stephen Malkmus  
at Pavement's  
first New York gig  
in 11 years



rock jams like "Grounded" between singalongs "Silence Kit" and "Unfair."

It was a reminder of how much ground Pavement covered. They were the band that could do it all, mixing up New York noise with California stoner vibes, Euro art punk with American hardcore, yet making it all seem like a breeze.

The show ended with "Range Life," a poignant ballad about the passing of youth. As he walked offstage, Malkmus indulged in his only cornball rock-star move of the night: He tried to toss a guitar pick into the crowd. But it missed and plopped onto the stage. Malkmus shrugged, laughed and kept walking. **ROB SHEFFIELD**

## Robert Plant's Roots-Rock Revival



Bowery Ballroom,  
September 12th, New York

**I**N HIS FIRST NEW YORK show to support his new album, *Band of Joy*, Robert Plant played a rare, intimate club set that says a lot about the Led Zeppelin singer's state of mind — it was 90 minutes of Smoky Mountains-via-Mordor psychedelic roots rock that weaved together unexpected covers, traditional Americana and clever reworkings of Zep tunes and Plant's solo catalog.



Plant  
onstage in  
New York

(Did anyone expect a rockabilly version of Plant's long-forgotten 1988 hit "Tall Cool One"?) With his leonine hair and unbuttoned shirt, Plant still looks

every bit the certified rock god — though he's steering away from Zeppelin-esque theatrics. Instead, Plant focused on more subtle pleasures: the cool exhale of "Rich Woman," a coiled, hypnotic version of Los Lobos' "Angel Dance." Even the four trips into the Zep canon felt like new songs: "Gallows Pole" became boot-stomping bluegrass, and "Houses of the Holy" emerged as a loose, Eagles-style country rocker. That's Plant in 2010: more twangy than heavy, more rootsy than rock & roll.

**MICHAEL ENDELMAN**

## TRIBUTES

### Sixties Folk-Music Critic Irwin Silber

1925-2010

Irwin Silber, a founder of the influential folk-revival magazine *Sing Out!*, died on September 8th in Oakland of complications from Alzheimer's disease. He was 84. Silber began the magazine in 1950, and under his leadership it became the bible of the folk revival, publishing essays, criticism and sheet music to songs by Bob Dylan, Phil Ochs and others. When Dylan strayed from protest music in 1964, Silber published a scathing open letter to the singer: "Your new songs seem to be all inner-directed now... maybe even a little maudlin or a little cruel on occasion," he wrote. Many have thought that Silber was the target of Dylan's anger in 1965's "Positively 4th Street." Wrote Dylan in his memoir *Chronicles, Vol. 1*, "Silber scolded me as if he alone and a few others had the keys to the real world.... I liked Irwin, but I couldn't relate to it." After stepping down as *Sing Out!* editor in 1967, Silber wrote for the radical-leftist newspaper *Guardian*. "Irwin was at the center of power of the whole folk revival," says folk musician Happy Traum, who replaced Silber at *Sing Out!* "He turned this little pamphlet into a substantial magazine that was hugely important to the folk-music community."



Silber

### Leonard Skinner

1933-2010

Leonard Skinner, a Jacksonville, Florida, gym teacher whose strict enforcement of Robert E. Lee High School's no-long-hair policy inspired some former students to name their group Lynyrd Skynyrd, died in his sleep on September 20th. He was 77. Because of their hair, Skinner once sent several future Lynyrd Skynyrd band members, including Ronnie Van Zandt and Gary Rossington, to the principal's office. Though Skinner claimed to have no memory of them, he later became friendly with Skynyrd, even introducing them at a hometown concert.

CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT: GUY EPPLE; MOSES ASCH/AP IMAGES; DIANA WONG



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# ON THE CHARTS



**MARS ATTACKS**  
The first single on Mars' debut LP is a Number One hit.

## Bruno Mars Hits Top 10 With Doo-Wop Sound, Reggae Vibes

**Producer-songwriter behind singles for B.o.B, Cee Lo drops solo album**

**B**EING A NEWLY CROWNED pop sensation isn't all jam sessions and VMA afterparties. "I was just getting used to hearing my voice on the radio when they told me to put down the food and get in shape for TV," says 25-year-old singer-songwriter Bruno Mars.

As part of L.A. songwriting/production team the Smeezingtons, Mars helped create massive singles for Flo Rida ("Right Round") and Cee Lo ("Fuck You"). "At first, no one knew who we were," Mars says. "We just happened to write some good songs." But when Mars' high, clean vocals began appearing on — and defining —

smashes like B.o.B's "Nothin' on You" and Travie McCoy's "Billionaire," he stepped out on his own. Now he's got a hit single, "Just the Way You Are," and a new solo album, *Doo-Wops & Hooligans*, out October 5th. Nothing seems to be able to stop Mars' ascent: Despite an arrest on September 19th for suspected narcotics possession in Las Vegas, he was still confirmed as the musical guest on *SNL* on October 9th.

Mars was born Peter Hernandez to a Filipina mother and a Puerto Rican father who moved to Hawaii from Brooklyn. A chubby kid, Peter got the nickname Bruno from 1960s wrestler Bruno Sammartino; Mars chose the surname to suggest "I'm so out of this world, you shouldn't fuck with me."

His music career began on Honolulu's tourist circuit with his family's band. At age five, Mars starred as a tyke Elvis impersonator in *Honeymoon in Vegas*; by 18, he'd moved to L.A. and signed a record contract. When that deal sputtered, Mars began writing for other artists. "It was hard for me to stomach," he says, "having my voice on the demo but the song coming out on someone else's album."

Not a problem anymore: Mars' new LP represents his neo-retro vision, with songs that mix Frankie Lyman soul, Coldplay grandeur and Bob Marley's easygoing vibe. "I'm a fan of simple-ass songs," he says. "Like doo-wop: It's so to-the-point and melody-driven. I'm old-school like that."

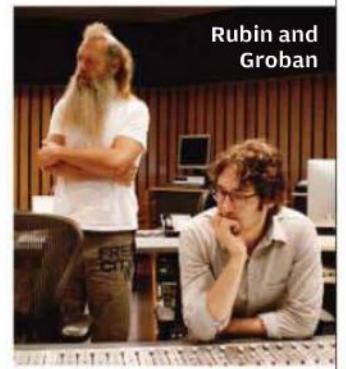
MATT DIEHL

## IN THE STUDIO

### Josh Groban, Rick Rubin Team Up

**Josh Groban** and his new producer, **Rick Rubin**, know that they seem like an odd couple. "It was not a gimmick or a feeling of 'Let's do something different and change people's minds about me,'" says the classical-pop singer, whose albums have sold more than 25 million copies worldwide. "We just really liked hanging out." The result of the duo's year and a half of work is *Illuminations*, due out this fall. "The feeling is more of a true classical experience, without trying to modernize it," says Rubin. "You won't find any instruments on this record that wouldn't fit at Carnegie Hall." Save, that is, for the Portuguese-language "Voce Existe em Mim," which features an all-girl Brazilian drum corps. "It's probably the closest I'll get to a dance record," the singer says. Most of the record was co-penned by Groban and ex-Semisonic frontman **Dan Wilson**, and there is one cover: the Nick Cave rocker "Straight to You," transformed into an apocalyptic power ballad. "The original is a real rocker," says Rubin. "You wouldn't recognize it unless you really knew the song."

CHRIS WILLMAN



Rubin and Groban



### Sara Bareilles Strikes Back

Sara Bareilles had cut four tracks for her new album when her label started giving feedback. "I was pretty defensive," she recalls. "Sometimes other peoples' opinions can sting a little bit." So the singer, whose 2007 "Love Song" was a smash hit, responded with "King of Anything," a piano-pop tune with a chipper vibe but defiant lyrics: "So you dare tell me who to be?/Who died and made you king of anything?" The single helped her second album, *Kaleidoscope Heart*, debut at Number One, selling 90,000 copies. What has Bareilles learned? "You can be a real bitch," she says, "if you just make it sound happy."

PATRICK DOYLE

■ **Animal Collective's Panda Bear** (real name Noah Lennox) says his new LP is influenced by the White Stripes and Nirvana. "I had this idea of a foundation of guitars, stacked with heavy, cave-man rhythms," he says of *Tomboy*, due early next year. "For the vocals, I was really into Frank Sinatra-style crooner vibes, but I can't sing like that, so it's my version of it."

■ **Fiona Apple's** first LP since 2005 is reportedly coming out next spring.

CLOCKWISE FROM TOP: HARPER SMITH; LEANN MUELLER; RO/KABIK/RETNA



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# HOT LIST

## 1 MY CHEMICAL ROMANCE

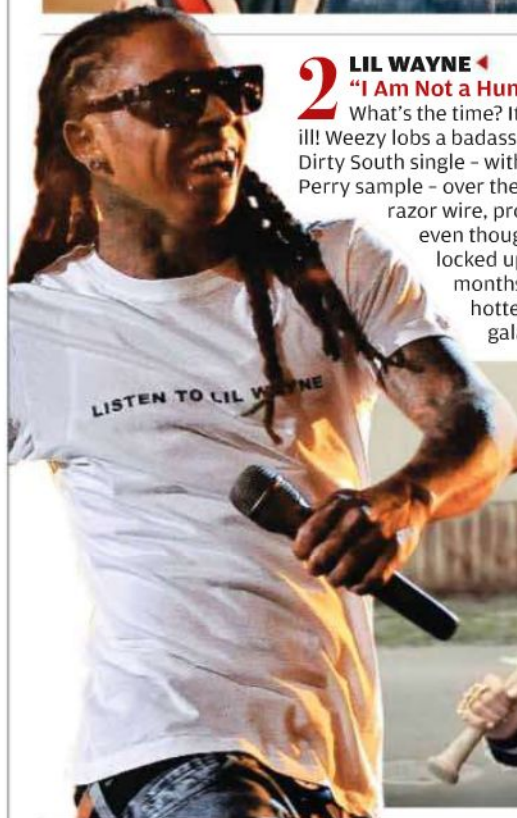
"Na Na Na (Na Na Na Na Na Na Na Na)"

The first single from My Chem's long-awaited new LP seems to be about a post-apocalyptic world where people do lots of drugs. (Sounds fun!) Don't think too hard - it's also a Stooges-y glam-punk monster with a singsong chorus that's catchier than bedbugs.



## 2 LIL WAYNE "I Am Not a Human Being"

What's the time? It's time to get ill! Weezy lobs a badass Beasties-go-Dirty South single - with a killer Lee Perry sample - over the Rikers Island razor wire, proving that even though he's been locked up for seven months, he's still the hottest MC in the galaxy.



## 3 SLEIGH BELLS "Infinity Guitars" video

This new clip from the indie-electro duo has a sexy Skinemax vibe: A Ferrari pulls up, and a foxy chick in a school uniform gets out wielding a baseball bat. Please, Hammer, don't hurt us - except with your pile-driver beats and girl-group chants.



## 4 BELLE AND SEBASTIAN "Write About Love"

Bust out your diary, grab a cup of Earl Grey - our fave chamber-pop softies are back. The lead single for B&S's new LP is a mod-Sixties retro-pop jam about hating your job. So pretty, it'll blow your argyle socks off.



## 5 DAS RACIST Sit Down, Man mixtape

Brooklyn's best multi-culti rap goofballs follow the retarded genius of "Combination Pizza Hut and Taco Bell" with a mixtape of actual hip-hop that's funny like Biz Markie, surreal like Weezy and postmodern like a Derrida seminar. Grad school, bitches!



2: LESTER COHEN/WIREIMAGE; 4: ANDY SHEPPARD/REDFERNS/GETTY IMAGES; 5: BRANDEN OLSON



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# Ron Wood

The guitarist on his star-filled new solo LP, getting sober and what's next for the Rolling Stones

By Austin Scaggs

**T**HOUGH THE ROLLING STONES HAVE been on hiatus for the past three years, Ron Wood has been in the headlines – but not for his guitar-playing. “I was being followed everywhere by the press,” he says of the paparazzi. “I still am.” In the summer of 2008, he left his wife of two decades and shacked up with a young Russian girl, but after a dramatic breakup last December, Wood refocused his energy on music, painting and staying clean. “After I left home, around Christmas, I found myself in L.A., and my friend Steve Bing said, ‘People want to hear you play, man.’” So before long, Wood was in a studio with Slash, Flea, Ivan Neville and Jim Keltner, cutting a funk-up cover of the Willie Dixon classic “Spoonful.” “That was the icebreaker,” says Wood, who just released a solo album, *I Feel Like Playing*. “In a way,” says Wood, 63, “this album has marked the end of a chapter and the beginning of a new one.”

**For a while, things looked bleak in your life: divorce, rumors that you were broke and drinking heavily.**

I’m a nomadic Gemini. All my life I’ve been used to being broke one minute and rolling in millions the next. I’ve never really paid much attention to my wealth or lack of it, but I always knew I’d get through it. I’m more responsible for my life now, more focused.

**Through your ups and downs, you’ve always been productive.**

I think that’s what has saved me. When I’m not on the bottle, I have a natural energy. I’m absolutely uncontrollable and on the go. I used to get high, and it was great, but I didn’t need those drugs, or the false affirmation I got from alcohol. It was slowing me down, and I was starting to get bitter and twisted, saying things that weren’t me.

**You’ve got lots of great people on this record: Flea, Billy Gibbons, Slash, Eddie Vedder...**

Slash was recording down the road from me in L.A., and he offered to stop by

anytime – my connection with him is unwritten, like I have with Keith. We speak to each other through our guitars. With Eddie, I just bumped into him in Hawaii, and he said, “Let’s do some writing.” He’s a really good wordsmith.

**You have a killer solo on “I Don’t Think So.”**

That was my Fender with a whammy bar. Doing guitar takes in the studio is like foreplay, with the eventual orgasm. When you know you’ve hit it, you look up at the engineer and go, “Did you get that?” And when he says “Yes!” that’s a great feeling.

**There must be that split second of doubt before the engineer says, “I got it.”**

Oh, yeah! I’ve had engineers in the past say, “No. Didn’t tape that one, you weren’t quite cutting it.” That’s the worst feeling in the world. The best is when the engineer is in tears – that’s the crown topper.

**You’ve jammed with so many greats over the years – any gigs stand out?**

When John Lee Hooker came out and played with us in 1989, we never had any clue what key he’d be playing in. He’d look at us and say, “What key?!” He had no idea. Finally, before one song on the second night, he said, “E,” and I shouted to the band, “Boys, he gave us a clue! It’s in E!”

**The Stones usually tour every three years, like clockwork. Well, it’s been three years.**

Yeah, we’re due for our summit meeting, where we all sit around a table and bullshit. It’s really just good fun to get all the boys together. Everyone’s got itchy feet. We’ll know something by December.

**How is the Faces reunion going?**

Great. Mick Hucknall is singing just like Rod used to in the Seventies. The songs came together like no time had gone by. We may do something in January. So while the Stones are on the back burner, I shall keep my chops together. I’ve got to keep my fingers hard.

**Does a Stones tour shred your fingertips?**

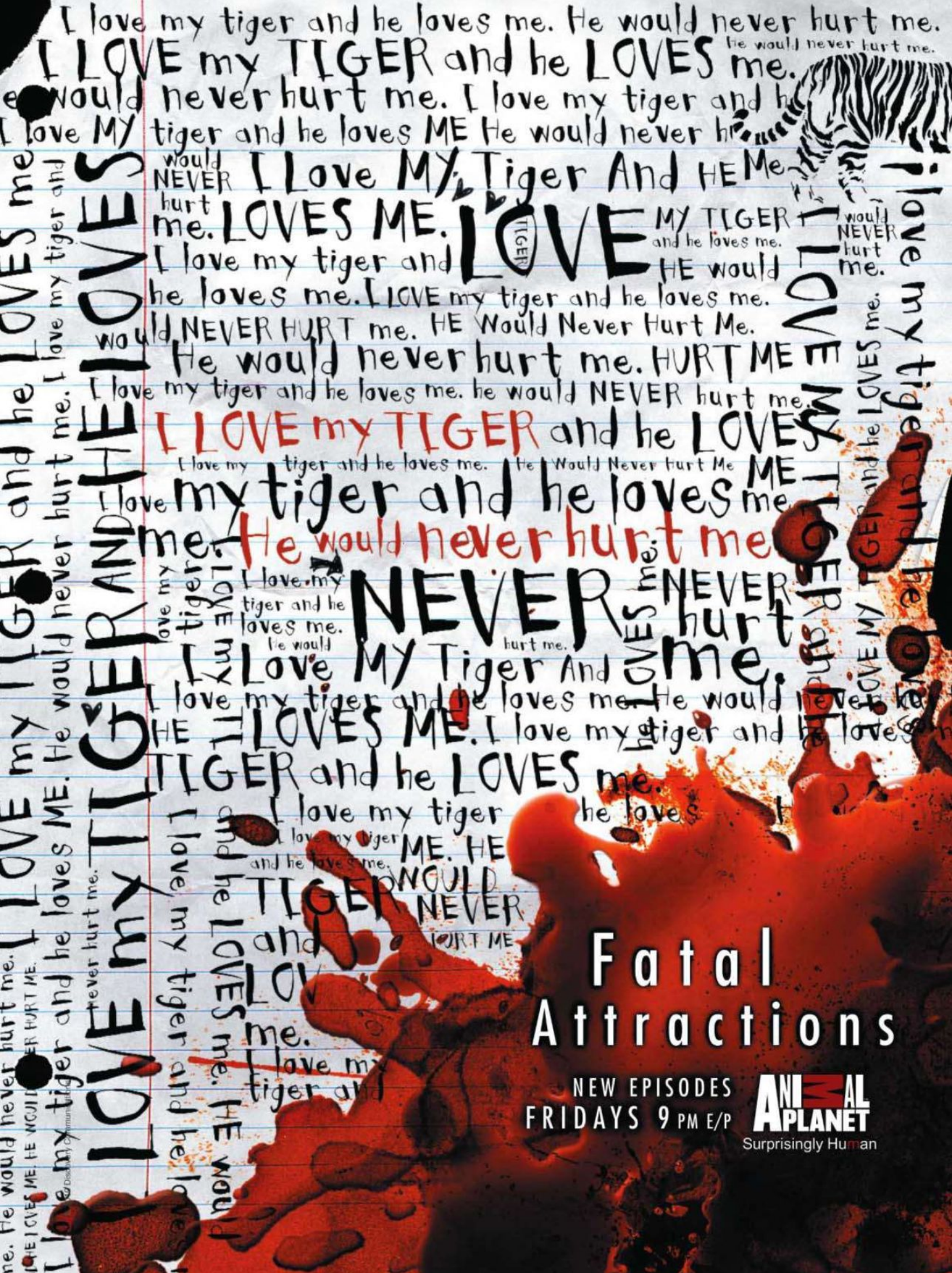
Oh, yeah. You usually shred them during rehearsals and spend the tour healing up. Soaking your fingers in vinegar helps.

**I thought Krazy Glue was best.**

Krazy Glue is the woman’s way out [laughs]. Pure alcohol is the best toughener, and malt vinegar is a close second. If I used alcohol, I’d end up drinking the fucking saucer I put it in.







# Fatal Attractions

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"California is not the most beautiful city in the entire world, I don't think." —Miley Cyrus

# Random Notes

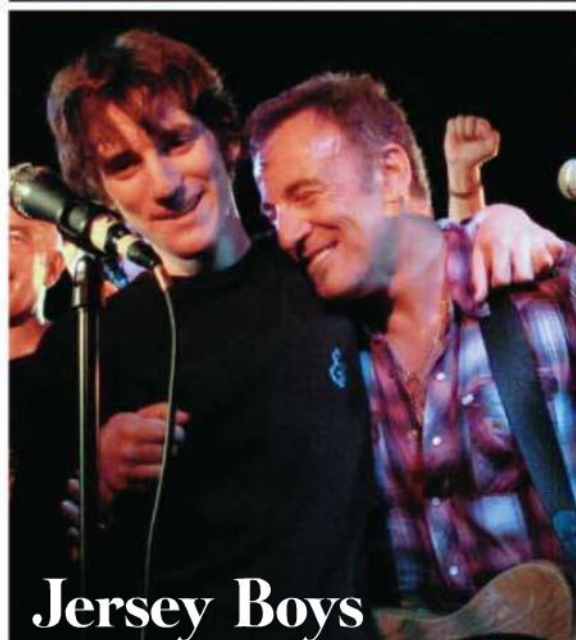


## Lady Liberty

A GOP filibuster stymied attempts to overturn the military's "don't ask, don't tell" policy, but that didn't stop Lady Gaga from trying. At a rally in Portland, Maine, the pop star borrowed Walter Mondale's glasses and delivered a speech she titled "The Prime Rib of America," saying, "Equality is the prime rib of America, but because I'm gay, I don't get to enjoy the greatest cut of meat my country has to offer." Later she added, "Doesn't it seem that we should send home the straight soldier who hates the gay soldier?" Touché!

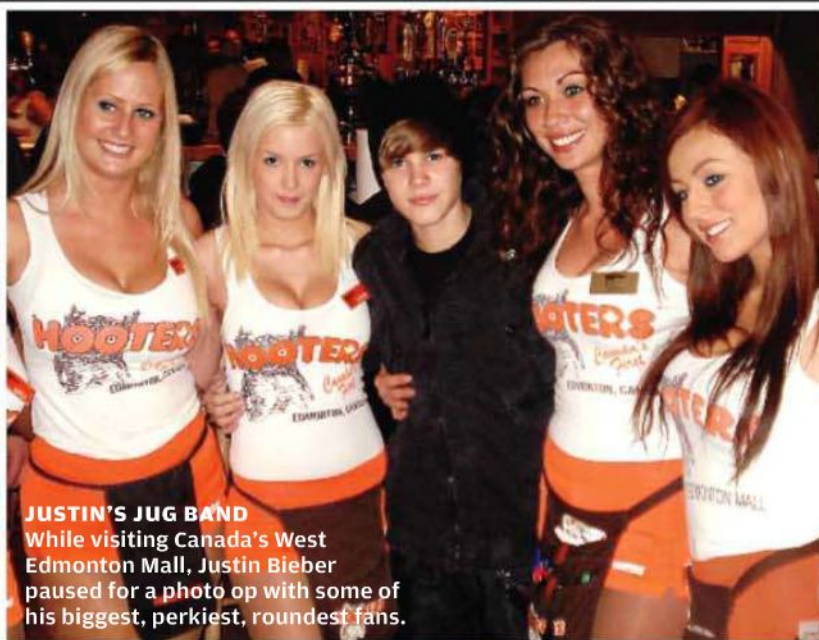
Brace yourself for an Obama-Gaga ticket in 2012.

#4THE4K RALLY



## Jersey Boys

News flash: For the \$2,632nd time, Bruce played the Stone Pony. About 800 fans packed the Jersey sweat hole and paid big bucks to get into the benefit gig. Springsteen - who brought son Sam onstage - tore through "Rosalita," "Thunder Road" and other classics. After two and a half hours, Bruce's sweat was seen flowing down Ocean Avenue.

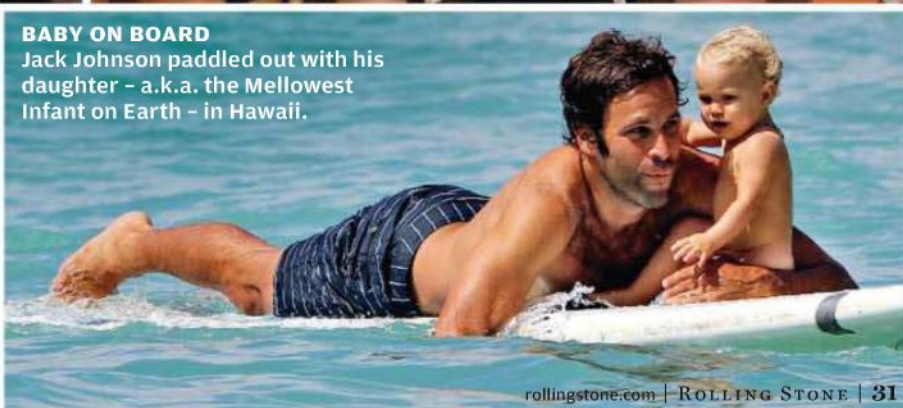


### JUSTIN'S JUG BAND

While visiting Canada's West Edmonton Mall, Justin Bieber paused for a photo op with some of his biggest, perkiest, roundest fans.

### BABY ON BOARD

Jack Johnson paddled out with his daughter - a.k.a. the Mellowest Infant on Earth - in Hawaii.



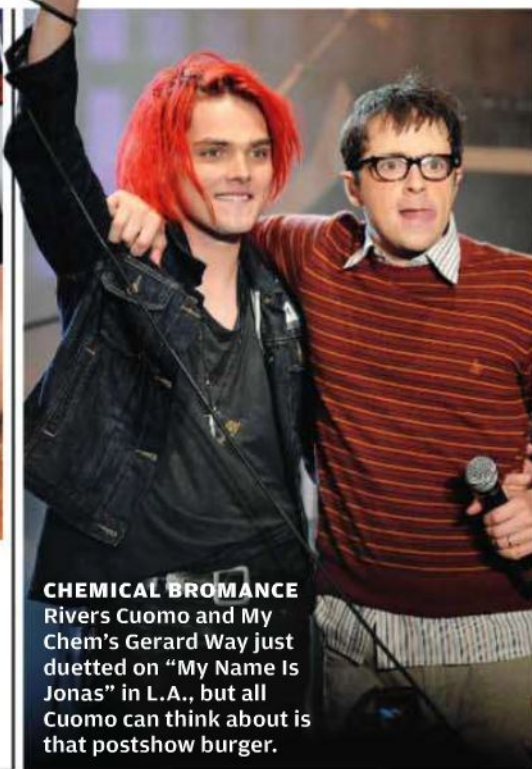




Sean, Yoko Ono, Cynthia and Julian Lennon (from left) at the Morrison Hotel Gallery

## The Lennons Come Together

The entire Lennon clan - including Sean, Yoko and John's first wife, Cynthia - united for Julian Lennon's new photo exhibit in New York. "The process of doing photos is a lot smoother than the road I've had with music," said Julian, who showed off landscapes, studio shots of U2 and sexytime snaps of Kate Hudson. "My dad wasn't a photographer. He used to take a couple Polaroids - this is my own thing."



**CHEMICAL BROMANCE**  
Rivers Cuomo and My Chem's Gerard Way just duetted on "My Name Is Jonas" in L.A., but all Cuomo can think about is that postshow burger.



### STATE OF LOVE AND TRUST

Everybody got lei'd at the oceanside wedding of Eddie Vedder and his longtime squeeze, Jill McCormick, in Oahu. Welcome to the Pearl Family, Jill!



### THE GOOD LIFE

Kanye West got off of his cloud to attend a Fashion Week bash in New York, where he kicked it with OG Mick and his shortie, L'Wren Scott.



### ROMANCING THE STONE

Johnny Depp opted for the veal cannelloni, while Keith wolfed down a plate of Marlboros alla vodka during a dinner date in London.

CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT: WENDELL TEODORO/WIREIMAGE; © 2010 DVS/ROCKINEXPOSURES; INFPHOTO.COM; DAISY JOHNSON/PATRICKMCMILLAN.COM/SIPA PRESS; DANNY CLINCH



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**HOW ABOUT THEM COWBOYS?**  
Dallas QB Tony Romo is off to an 0-2 start.



# Meltdown in Dallas

The early-season struggles of the Cowboys and the Vikings have been ridiculously amplified in the vast NFL echo chamber By Matt Taibbi

**T**URN ON THE TV AND you might get the idea that the only thing working in America right now is pro football. Ratings are up, and the NFL blankets the media landscape with its own 24-hour channel. Games air on five different networks, there's a smash-hit HBO series, a myriad of players have their own reality shows (and in Ocho and T.O., two on the same team!), and there are more beat-reporter tweets per hour than all the preteen chicks in Southern California. All that juice means more revenue for the league, but for the fan it adds another angle: When the absurdly overhyped team you hated hearing Merrill Hoge and Shannon Sharpe blather about starts off 0-2, the schadenfreude factor now reaches previously unimaginable heights.

No disrespect to the fine people of Dallas and Minnesota, but it's just never been more fun to watch teams like the Cowboys and the Vikings piss away their seasons. It used to be that being a football fan was at least 90 percent about rooting for your home team, and the other 10 percent of your time was mostly wrapped up

in the dreary utilitarian business of rooting against your division rivals or (later in the year) for some absurd playoff tiebreaker. But with the wire-to-wire media coverage that begins five seconds after the Super Bowl, drones on through the violently flapping jaws of Mel Kiper at draft time, cranks up to red-hotness during those 65 preseason games that are now broadcast, and reaches a fever pitch with all those slow-motion panoramic shots of Rex Ryan's engorged belly on *Hard Knocks*, we're now all emotionally invested in the outcome of almost every single game.

In the case of the Vikings, there was no middle ground: By the time the latest agonizing courtship of Brett Favre was mercifully over, you were either a Minnesota Vikings fan and stoked beyond the limits of sanity for a contending run, or you were one of the 6.5 billion other humans worldwide who found themselves involuntarily rooting for 300-pound Saints tackle Sedrick Ellis to literally unscrew Favre's head and roll it down Bourbon Street on opening night.

The mountains of preseason Favre hype coupled with Min-

ny's horrific 0-2 start have turned the Vikings' season into classic avert-your-eyes train-wreck reality TV of the kind we haven't seen since George W. Bush was running the free world. Favre's fourth-quarter end-zone interception in the Miami game, his third of the game, was one of the all-time horror-movie moments in the history of the NFL regular season. The pick was vintage

## THE RED ZONE

It can't bode well for the New York Jets that their wideout Braylon Edwards wowed fashion critics when he appeared in court to answer DWI charges dressed in ripped jeans and a black T-shirt that read ONE LOVE on the front and had silver angel wings on the back. In the history of courtroom sartorial choices, it wasn't quite up there with Michael Jackson showing up for his molestation trial wearing a surgical mask, but it still makes you wonder about the notoriously player-friendly culture of the Jets – if the staff is too afraid to tell a player that judges like ties, it's hard to imagine they'll be too tough about asking for extra push-ups in December. **M.T.**

pre-2009 Bad Favre, a perfect strike drilled right in the gut of Dolphins corner Jason Allen despite the fact that a) Visanthe Shiancoe was wide open in the flat for an easy first down, and b) Favre had a perfect pocket around him and could have soft-boiled an egg back there instead of hurrying to throw the ball. The networks might as well have done a *Doctor Who*-style crazy reverse-zoom shot of the field at that moment to show the Vikings' season instantly spinning away into nothingness.

Meanwhile, there's been no single signature moment of the Cowboys' early-season disaster – it's been more like one of those oil-well fires that just rages angrily for days, spitting out the occasional deadly explosion but never waning, bad energy flowing to the surface from a seemingly limitless source far underground somewhere. Non-Cowboy fans immediately suspected Jerry Jones as the likely karmic source, but it's near impossible to imagine what bad deeds even Jones could have wrought in the past nine months to deserve both the incredible Tashard Choice pre-halftime fumble (the horrified look on Wade Phillips' face as DeAngelo Hall somersaulted into the end zone reminded me of Jackie O leaping backward onto the trunk of the Lincoln to put JFK's brains back in his head) and that ghastly game-ending Alex Barron holding penalty.

I consulted my karmic calculator after that game and concluded that Jones either has a pair of Norwegian exchange students locked in a wooden box under his bed, or else he spent the off-season hunting and devouring endangered species (I'm thinking something majestic and dignified in its rarity, like an ocelot) – it has to be *something*. It seems to me the only real possibility is that he lurks in chat rooms with eight-year-olds. Sadly, the 'Boys will probably survive this early funk, but for Cowboy-haters this blooper reel trotted out in Jones' supposed home Super Bowl year has been an unexpected pleasure that hopefully has no end in sight.



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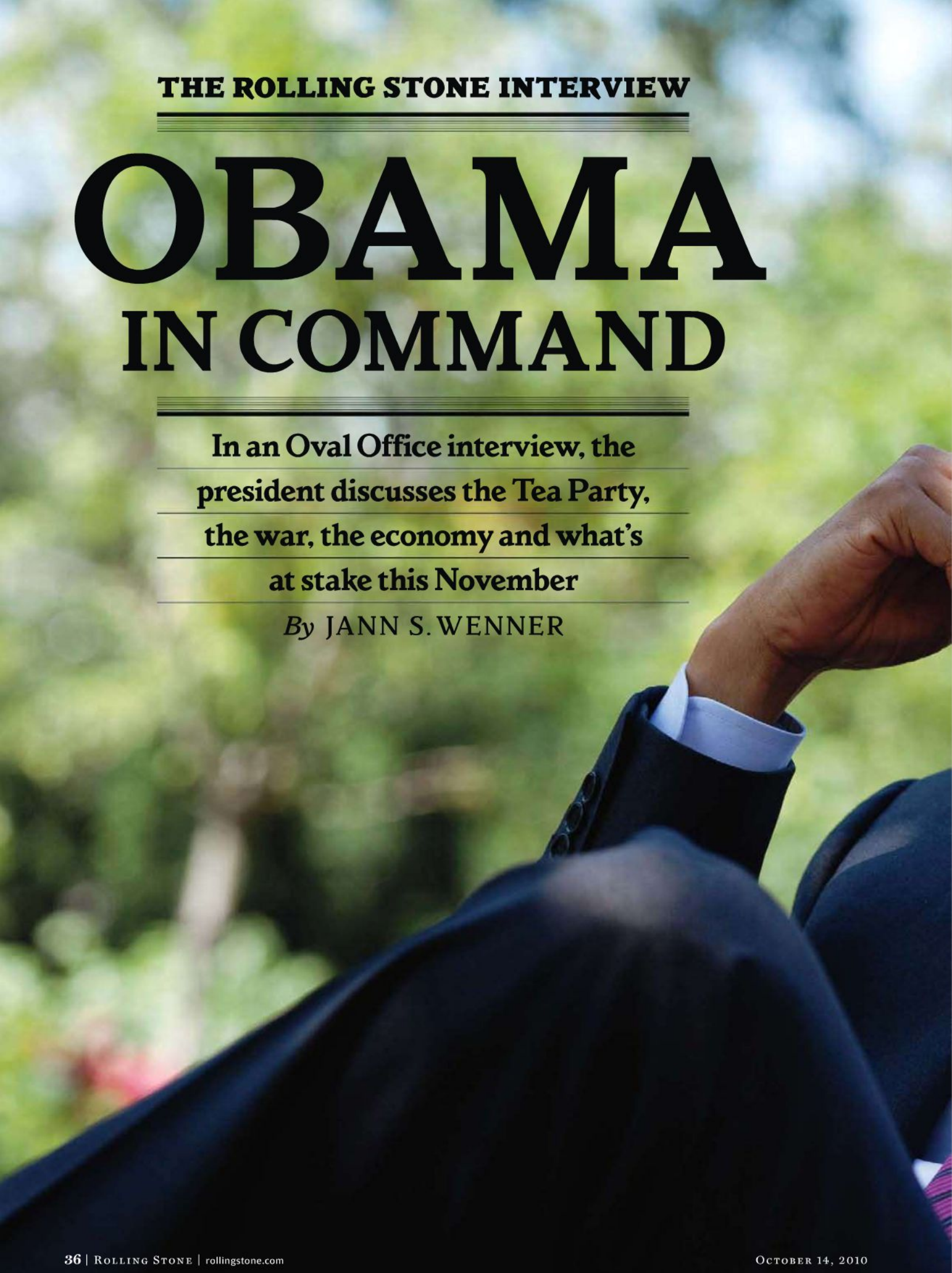
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**THE ROLLING STONE INTERVIEW**

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# **OBAMA IN COMMAND**

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**In an Oval Office interview, the  
president discusses the Tea Party,  
the war, the economy and what's  
at stake this November**

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*By* JANN S. WENNER





PETE SOUZA/THE WHITE HOUSE

**THE WAR AT HOME**  
The president in the Rose Garden on June 17th. "The unprecedented obstruction in the Senate took its toll," he concedes.



**W**E ARRIVED AT THE SOUTHWEST GATE OF THE WHITE HOUSE a little after one o'clock on the afternoon of September 17th. It was a warm fall day, but the capital felt quiet and half-empty, as it does on Fridays at the end of summer, with Congress still in recess. *ROLLING STONE* had interviewed Barack Obama twice before, both times aboard his campaign plane – first in June 2008, a few days after he won the Democratic nomination, and again that October, a month before his election. This time executive editor Eric Bates and I sat down with the president in the Oval Office, flanked by busts of Abraham Lincoln and Martin Luther King Jr. The conversation stretched on for nearly an hour and a quarter. The president began by complimenting my multi-colored striped socks. “If I wasn’t president,” he laughed, “I could wear socks like that.”

*When you came into office, you felt you would be able to work with the other side. When did you realize that the Republicans had abandoned any real effort to work with you and create bipartisan policy?*

Well, I’ll tell you that given the state of the economy during my transition, between my election and being sworn in, our working assumption was that everybody was going to want to pull together, because there was a sizable chance that we could have a financial meltdown and the entire country could plunge into a depression. So we had to work very rapidly to try to create a combination of measures that would stop the free-fall and cauterize the job loss.

The recovery package we shaped was put together on the theory that we shouldn’t exclude any ideas on the basis of ideological predispositions, and so a third of the Recovery Act were tax cuts. Now, they happened to be the most progressive tax cuts in history, very much geared toward middle-class families. There was not only a fairness rationale to that, but also an economic rationale – those were the folks who were most likely to spend the money and, hence, prop up demand at a time when the economy was really freezing up.

I still remember going over to the Republican caucus to meet with them and present our ideas, and to solicit ideas from them before we presented the final package. And on the way over, the caucus essentially released a statement that said, “We’re going to all vote ‘No’ as a caucus.” And this was before we’d even had the conversation. At that point, we realized that we weren’t going to get the kind of cooperation we’d anticipated. The strategy the Republicans were going to pursue was one of sitting on the sidelines, trying to gum up the works, based on the assumption that given the scope and size of the recovery, the economy probably wouldn’t be very good, even in 2010, and that they were better off being able to assign the blame to us than work with us to try to solve the problem.

*How do you feel about the fact that day after day, there’s this really destructive attack on whatever you propose? Does that bother you? Has it shocked you?*

I don’t think it’s a shock. I had served in the United States Senate; I had seen how the filibuster had become a routine tool to slow things down, as opposed to what it used to be, which was a selective tool – although often a very destructive one, because it was typically targeted at civil rights and the aspirations of African-Americans who were trying to be freed from Jim

Crow. But I’d been in the Senate long enough to know that the machinery there was breaking down.

What I was surprised somewhat by, and disappointed by, although I’ve got to give some grudging admiration for just how effective it’s been, was the degree to which [Senate Minority Leader] Mitch McConnell was able to keep his caucus together on a lot of issues. Eventually, we were able to wear them down, so that we were able to finally get really important laws passed, some of which haven’t gotten a lot of attention – the credit-card reform bill, or the anti-tobacco legislation, or preventing housing and mortgage fraud. We’d be able to pick off two or three Republicans who wanted to do the right thing.

But the delays, the cloture votes, the unprecedented obstruction that has taken place in the Senate took its toll. Even if you eventually got something done, it would take so long and it would be so contentious, that it sent a message to the public that “Gosh, Obama said he was going to come in and change Washington, and it’s exactly the same, it’s more contentious than ever.” Everything just seems to drag on – even what should be routine activities, like appointments, aren’t happening. So it created an atmosphere in which a public that is already very skeptical of government, but was maybe feeling hopeful right after my election, felt deflated and sort of felt, “We’re just seeing more of the same.”

*What do you think the Republican Party stands for today?*

Well, on the economic front, their only agenda seems to be tax cuts for the wealthiest Americans. If you ask their leadership what their agenda will be going into next year to bring about growth and improve the job numbers out there, what they will say is, “We just want these tax cuts for the wealthiest Americans, which will cost us \$700 billion and which we’re not going to pay for.”

Now what they’ll also say is, “We’re going to control spending.” But of course, when you say you’re going to borrow \$700 billion to give an average \$100,000-a-year tax break to people making a million dollars a year, or more, and you’re not going to pay for it; when Mitch McConnell’s overall tax package that he just announced recently was priced at about \$4 trillion; when you, as a caucus, reject a bipartisan idea for a fiscal commission that originated from Judd Gregg, Republican budget chair, and Kent Conrad, Democratic budget chair, so that I had to end up putting the thing together administratively because we couldn’t get any support – you don’t get a sense that they’re actually serious on the deficit side.



*What do you think of the Tea Party and the people behind it?*

I think the Tea Party is an amalgam, a mixed bag of a lot of different strains in American politics that have been there for a long time. There are some strong and sincere libertarians who are in the Tea Party who generally don't believe in government intervention in the market or socially. There are some social conservatives in the Tea Party who are rejecting me the same way they rejected Bill Clinton, the same way they would reject any Democratic president as being too liberal or too progressive. There are strains in the Tea Party that are troubled by what they saw as a series of instances in which the middle-class and working-class people have been abused or hurt by special interests and Washington, but their anger is misdirected.

And then there are probably some aspects of the Tea Party that are a little darker, that have to do with anti-immigrant sentiment or are troubled by what I represent as the president. So I think it's hard to characterize the Tea Party as a whole, and I think it's still defining itself.

*Do you think that it's being manipulated?*

There's no doubt that the infrastructure and the financing of the Tea Party come from some very traditional, very powerful, special-interest lobbies. I don't think this is a secret. Dick Armey and FreedomWorks, which was one of the first organizational mechanisms to bring Tea Party folks together, are financed by very conservative industries and forces that are opposed to enforcement of environmental laws, that are opposed to an energy policy that would be different than the fossil-fuel-based approach we've been taking, that don't believe in regulations that protect workers from safety violations in the workplace, that want to make sure that we are not regulating the financial industries in ways that we have.

There's no doubt that there is genuine anger, frustration and anxiety in the public at large about the worst financial crisis we've experienced since the Great Depression. Part of what we have to keep in mind here is this recession is worse than the Ronald Reagan recession of the Eighties, the 1990-91 recession, and the 2001 recession combined. The depths of it have been profound. This body politic took a big hit in the gut, and that always roils up our politics, and can make people angry. But because of the ability of a lot of very well-funded groups to point that anger – I think misdirect that anger – it is translating into a relevant political force in this election.

*What do you think of Fox News? Do you think it's a good institution for America and for democracy?*

[Laughs] Look, as president, I swore to uphold the Constitution, and part of that Constitution is a free press. We've got a tradition in this country of a press that oftentimes is opinionated. The golden age of an objective press was a pretty narrow span of time in our history. Before that, you had folks like Hearst who used their newspapers very intentionally to promote their

viewpoints. I think Fox is part of that tradition – it is part of the tradition that has a very clear, undeniable point of view. It's a point of view that I disagree with. It's a point of view that I think is ultimately destructive for the long-term growth of a country that has a vibrant middle class and is competitive in the world. But as an economic enterprise, it's been wildly successful. And I suspect that if you ask Mr. Murdoch what his number-one concern is, it's that Fox is very successful.

*You've passed more progressive legislation than any president since Lyndon Johnson. Yet your base does not seem nearly as fired up as the opposition, and you don't seem to be getting the credit for those legislative victories. There was talk that you were going to mobilize your grass-roots volunteers and use*

*them to pressure Congress, but you decided for whatever reason not to involve the public directly and not to force a filibuster on issues like health care. What do you say to those people who have developed a sense of frustration – your base – who feel that you need to fight harder?*

That's a bunch of different questions, so let me see if I can kind of knock them out one by one.

One of the healthy things about the Democratic Party is that it is diverse and opinionated. We have big arguments within the party because we got a big tent, and that tent grew during my election and in the mid-term election previously. So making everybody happy within the Democratic Party is always going to be tough.

Some of it, also, has to do with – and I joke about it – that there's a turn of mind among Democrats and progressives where a lot of times we see the glass as half-empty. It's like, "Well, gosh, we've got this historic health care legislation that we've been trying to get for 100 years, but it didn't have every bell and whistle that we wanted right now, so let's focus on what we didn't get instead of what we got." That self-critical element of the progressive mind is probably a healthy

thing, but it can also be debilitating.

When I talk to Democrats around the country, I tell them, "Guys, wake up here. We have accomplished an incredible amount in the most adverse circumstances imaginable." I came in and had to prevent a Great Depression, restore the financial system so that it functions, and manage two wars. In the midst of all that, I ended one of those wars, at least in terms of combat operations. We passed historic health care legislation, historic financial regulatory reform and a huge number of legislative victories that people don't even notice. We wrestled away billions of dollars of profit that were going to the banks and middlemen through the student-loan program, and now we have tens of billions of dollars that are going directly to students to help them pay for college. We expanded national service more than we ever have before.

The Recovery Act alone represented the largest investment in research and development in our history, the largest invest-



#### THE OVAL OFFICE

Jann S. Wenner and the president on September 17th. "We've probably accomplished 70 percent of what we said we were going to," Obama says.





### FULL-COURT PRESS

When *ROLLING STONE* interviewed Obama in October 2008, we asked him what play toy he most wanted to install at the White House. "Basketball court," he said.

ment in infrastructure since Dwight Eisenhower, the largest investment in education – and that was combined, by the way, with the kind of education reform that we hadn't seen in this country in 30 years – and the largest investment in clean energy in our history.

You look at all this, and you say, "Folks, that's what you elected me to do." I keep in my pocket a checklist of the promises I made during the campaign, and here I am, halfway through my first term, and we've probably accomplished 70 percent of the things that we said we were going to do – and by the way, I've got two years left to finish the rest of the list, at minimum. So I think that it is very important for Democrats to take pride in what we've accomplished.

All that has taken place against a backdrop in which, because of the financial crisis, we've seen an increase in poverty, and an increase in unemployment, and people's wages and incomes have stagnated. So it's not surprising that a lot of folks out there don't feel like these victories have had an impact. What is also true is our two biggest pieces of legislation, health care and financial regulatory reform, won't take effect right away, so ordinary folks won't see the impact of a lot of these things for another couple of years. It is very important for progressives to understand that just on the domestic side, we've accomplished a huge amount.

When you look at what we've been able to do internationally – resetting our relations with Russia and potentially having a new START treaty by the end of the year, reinvigorating the Middle East peace talks, ending the combat mission in Iraq, promoting a G-20 structure that has drained away a lot of the sense of north versus south, east versus west, so that now the whole world

looks to America for leadership, and changing world opinion in terms of how we operate on issues like human rights and torture around the world – all those things have had an impact as well.

What is true, and this is part of what can frustrate folks, is that over the past 20 months, we made a series of decisions that were focused on governance, and sometimes there was a conflict between governance and politics. So there were some areas where we could have picked a fight with Republicans that might have gotten our base feeling good, but would have resulted in us not getting legislation done.

I could have had a knock-down, drag-out fight on the public option that might have energized you and *The Huffington Post*, and we would not have health care legislation now. I could have taken certain positions on aspects of the financial regulatory bill, where we got 90 percent of what we set out to get, and I could have held out for that last 10 percent, and we wouldn't have a bill. You've got to make a set of decisions in terms of "What are we trying to do here? Are we trying to just keep everybody ginned up for the next election, or at some point do you try to win elections because you're actually trying to govern?" I made a decision early on in my presidency that if I had an opportunity to do things that would make a difference for years to come, I'm going to go ahead and take it.

I just made the announcement about Elizabeth Warren setting up our Consumer Finance Protection Bureau out in the Rose Garden, right before you came in. Here's an agency that has the potential to save consumers billions of dollars over the next 20 to 30 years – simple stuff like making sure that folks don't jack up your credit cards without you knowing about it, making sure



that mortgage companies don't steer you to higher-rate mortgages because they're getting a kickback, making sure that payday loans aren't preying on poor people in ways that these folks don't understand. And you know what? That's what we say we stand for as progressives. If we can't take pleasure and satisfaction in concretely helping middle-class families and working-class families save money, get a college education, get health care – if that's not what we're about, then we shouldn't be in the business of politics. Then we're no better than the other side, because all we're thinking about is whether or not we're in power.

*Let me ask you about financial reform. Despite all the things like consumer protection that you did get accomplished, the regulation of Wall Street – especially the closing down of all the derivatives trading that was really at the heart of the financial meltdown – seems to have been eviscerated.*

I've got to disagree with that. If you take a look at it, what we've essentially said is that the vast majority of derivatives are now going to be sold through a clearinghouse. And if you ask the experts what was the best way to make sure the derivative markets didn't bring down the economy again, it's transparency, so that everybody understands who the counterparties are, everybody understands what the deal is, what the risks are – it's all above-board, it's all in the light of day.

People have legitimate concerns that if the rules drafted by all these various agencies in charge of implementing financial reform wind up with exceptions that are so big you can drive a truck through them, and suddenly you can have these specially tailored derivatives that are sold outside of the clearinghouse, then you could end up with an inadequate regulatory structure.

But if the rules are written properly – and I have confidence that the people I appointed to these agencies intend to apply them properly – it's going to make a difference. Is it going to solve every potential problem in Wall Street in a multi-trillion-dollar, worldwide, capital market? Probably not. There could end up being new schemes, new loopholes that folks are going to try to exploit. The special interests are already ginning up to try to influence the rulemaking process in all these issues, so we have to remain vigilant. But to say that we did not significantly improve oversight of the derivatives market, it just isn't true.

*There's also a concern when it comes to financial reform that your economic team is closely identified with Wall Street and the deregulation that caused the collapse. These are the folks who were supposed to have had oversight of Wall Street, and many of them worked for or were close to banks like Goldman Sachs.*

Let me first of all say this. . . .

*You used to work for Goldman Sachs!*

[Laughs] Exactly. I read some of the articles that Tim Dickinson and others have produced in *ROLLING STONE*. I understand the point of view that they're bringing. But look: Tim Geithner never worked for Goldman; Larry Summers didn't work for Goldman. There is no doubt that I brought in a bunch of folks who understand the financial markets, the same way, by the way, that FDR brought in a lot of folks who understood the financial markets after the crash, including Joe Kennedy, because my number-one job at that point was making sure that we did not have a full-fledged financial meltdown.

The reason that was so important was not because I was concerned about making sure that the folks who had been

making hundreds of millions of dollars were keeping their bonuses for the next year. The reason was because we were seeing 750,000 jobs a month being lost when I was sworn in. The consequence to Main Street, to ordinary folks, was catastrophic, and we had to make sure that we stopped the bleeding. We managed to stabilize the financial markets at a cost that is much less to taxpayers than anybody had anticipated. The truth of the matter is that TARP will end up costing probably less than \$100 billion, when all is said and done. Which I promise you, two years ago, you could have asked any economist and any financial expert out there, and they would have said, "We'll take that deal."

One of the things that you realize when you're in my seat is that, typically, the issues that come to my desk – there are no simple answers to them. Usually what I'm doing is operating on the basis of a bunch of probabilities: I'm looking at the best options available based on the fact that there are no easy choices. If there were easy choices, somebody else would have solved it, and it wouldn't have come to my desk.

That's true for financial regulatory reform, that's true on Afghanistan, that's true on how we deal with the terrorist threat. On all these issues, you've got a huge number of complex factors involved.

When you're sitting outside and watching, you think, "Well, that sounds simple," and you can afford to operate on the basis of your ideological predispositions.

What I'm trying to do – and certainly what we've tried to do in our economic team – is to keep a North Star out there: What are the core principles we're abiding by? In the economic sphere, my core principle is that America works best when you've got a growing middle class, and you've got ladders so that people who aren't yet in the middle class can aspire to the middle class, and if that broad base is rolling, then the country does well.

*How do you personally feel about hedge-fund managers who are making \$200 million a year and paying a 15 percent tax rate? Or the guy who made \$700 million one year*

*and compared you to Hitler for trying to raise his taxes above 15 percent – does that gall you?*

I've gotta say that I have been surprised by some of the rhetoric in the business press, in which we are accused of being anti-business. I know a lot of these guys who started hedge funds. They are making large profits, taking home large incomes, but because of a rule called "carried interest," they are paying lower tax rates than their secretaries, or the janitor that cleans up the building. Or folks who are out there as police officers and teachers and small-business people. So all we've said is that it makes sense for them to pay taxes on it like on ordinary income.

I understand why folks might disagree with that. I've yet to meet a broad base of people who are anxious to pay higher taxes. But the point you're making, which is exactly right, is that what should be a pretty straightforward policy argument ends up generating the kind of rhetoric we've been seeing: where I'm anti-business, I'm socialist, our administration is trying to destroy capitalism. That, I think, is over-the-top.

The average American out there who is my primary concern and is making 60 grand a year and paying taxes on all that income and trying to send their kids through school, and partly as a consequence of bad decisions on Wall Street, feels that their job is insecure and has seen their 401(k) decline by 30 percent,

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and has seen the value of their home decline – I don't think they're that sympathetic to these guys, and neither am I.

*Let's talk about the war in Afghanistan. Where were you when you first heard about the comments made by Gen. Stanley McChrystal and his staff, and how did you feel as you read them for yourself?*

I was in my office in the residence, in the Treaty Room. Joe Biden called me – he was the first one who heard about it. I think it was Sunday night, and I had one of the staff here send me up a copy, and I read through the article. I will say at the outset that I think Gen. McChrystal is a fine man, an outstanding soldier, and has served this country very well. I do not think that he meant those comments maliciously. I think some of those comments were from his staff, and so he was poorly served. And it pained me to have to make the decision I did. Having said that, he showed bad judgment. When I put somebody in charge of the lives of 100,000 young men and women in a very hazardous situation, they've got to conduct themselves at the highest standards, and he didn't meet those standards.

*But it couldn't have just been those remarks, which were casual and forgivable. The whole article was pretty damning.*

The remarks themselves, I think, showed poor judgment. The rest of the article had to do with a series of very difficult, complex choices on the ground in Afghanistan, in which, as I said before, there are no easy answers. So Gen. McChrystal, in response to a very serious and legitimate concern about civilian casualties in Afghanistan, put out orders that have significantly reduced civilian casualties. The flip side of it is that it frustrates our troops, who feel that they may not be able to go on the offense as effectively, and it may put them in danger. That's a profound strategic, tactical debate that takes place in the military. That's not unique to Gen. McChrystal – that's a debate that Gen. Petraeus is having to work his way through, that's a debate that I have to work my way through as commander in chief.

To broaden the issue for a second, you were asking about the sources of frustration in the progressive community; clearly, Afghanistan has to be near the top of the list, maybe at the top of the list. I always try to point out, number one, that this shouldn't have come as any surprise. When I was campaigning, I was very specific. I said, "We are going to end the war in Iraq, that was a mistake," and I have done that. What I also said was that we need to plus up what we're doing in Afghanistan, because that was where the original terrorist threat emanated, and we need to finish the job. That's what we're doing.

Now, I think that a lot of progressive supporters thought that maybe it would be easier than it has proven to be to try to bring Afghanistan to a place where we can see an end in sight. The fact of the matter is, when we came in, what we learned was that the neglect of Afghanistan had been more profound than we expected. Just simple examples: The Afghan National Army, the Afghan security forces, oftentimes were recruited, given a uniform, given a rifle, and that was it – they weren't getting trained. As a functional matter, there was no way that they were going to start taking the place of U.S. troops.

What we've had to do after an extensive review that I engaged in was to say to our commanders on the ground, "You guys have to have a strategy in which we are training Afghan

security forces, we're going to break the Taliban momentum, but I am going to establish a date at which we start transitioning down and we start turning these security functions over to a newly trained Afghan security force." That is what we're in the process of doing.

It is exacting a terrible cost. Whenever I go over to Walter Reed or Bethesda, or when I was in Afghanistan, and I meet kids who lost their legs or were otherwise badly injured, I am reminded of that cost. Nobody wants more than me to be able to bring that war to a close in a way that makes sure that region is not used as a base for terrorist attacks against the United States. But what we have to do is see this process through. Starting July of 2011, we will begin a transition process, and if the strategy we're engaged in isn't working, we're going to keep on re-examining it until we make sure that we've got a strategy that does work.

*But by every index we know of, there seems to be no part of the Afghanistan strategy that is working. The Taliban control more of the country than ever. The Karzai regime is incredibly corrupt and has lost the trust of its own people. The program to buy the loyalty of Taliban soldiers, which was used with the Awakening during the surge in Iraq, can't find enough takers for*

*the \$250 million that was allocated to it. The McChrystal offensive in Kandahar also failed. Afghanistan has been called the "graveyard of empires." In view of the fact that Great Britain failed there, the Soviet Union with millions of troops right on the border failed there – what makes you think we are going to succeed?*

Number one, this is very hard stuff. I knew it was hard a year ago, and I suspect a year from now, I will conclude that it's still hard, and it's messy. Number two, when you tick off these metrics that have quote-unquote "failed" – well, they haven't failed yet. They haven't succeeded yet. We've made progress in terms of creating a line of security around Kandahar, but there's no doubt that Kandahar is not yet a secure place any more than Mosul

or Fallujah were secure in certain phases of the Iraq War.

I will also agree that Afghanistan is harder than Iraq. This is the second-poorest country in the world. You've got no tradition of a civil service or bureaucracy that is effective countrywide. We have been very successful in taking out the middle ranks of the Taliban. We have been very successful in recruiting and beginning to train Afghan security forces. There are elements that are working, and there are elements that are not working.

Keep in mind that the decision I have to make is always, "If we're not doing this, then what does that mean? What are the consequences?" I don't know anybody who has examined the region who thinks that if we completely pulled out of Afghanistan, the Karzai regime collapsed, Kabul was overrun once again by the Taliban, and Sharia law was imposed throughout the country, that we would be safer, or the Afghan people would be better off, or Pakistan would be better off, or India would be better off, or that we would see a reduction in potential terrorist attacks around the world. You can't make that argument.

Some have argued that what we can do is have a smaller footprint in Afghanistan, focus on counterterrorism activities, but have less boots on the ground. We examined every option that's out there. I assure you: With all the problems we've got here at home, and the fact that I have to sign letters to the family mem-

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BUT I HAVE TO PLAY  
THE CARDS I'M DEALT."





#### DRIVEN TO SUCCEED

The president en route to speak about health care reform in March. "I could have had a knock-down, drag-out fight on the public option," he says, "and we would not have health care legislation now."

bers of every soldier who is killed in Afghanistan, if I can find a way of reducing the costs to the American taxpayer, and more profoundly, to our young men and women in uniform, while making sure that we are not rendered much more vulnerable to a terrorist attack in the future, that's going to be the option that I choose. But no matter what your ultimate belief is in terms of what will succeed in Afghanistan, it's going to take us several years to work through this issue.

Ideally, what would have happened was that we didn't go into Iraq. Right after our victory in 2001, if we had focused on rebuilding Afghanistan, and had been in much more direct day-to-day interaction with Karzai and his government, then we wouldn't find ourselves in this circumstance.

But you know what: I have to play the cards that I'm dealt. In an ideal world, I wouldn't have inherited a \$1.3 trillion deficit and the worst recession since the Great Depression. But you work with what's before you.

*Let me ask you about the Golfoil spill. British Petroleum fired Tony Hayward, so my question is: Why does Interior Secretary Ken Salazar still have his job? The corruption at Minerals Management Service was widely known at the time he came into office, as was reported several times in ROLLING STONE and other places, and that's what helped the Gulf disaster to happen.*

When Ken Salazar came in, he said to me, "One of my top priorities is cleaning up MMS." It was no secret. You had seen the kind of behavior in that office that was just over-the-top, and Ken did reform the agency to eliminate those core ethical lapses – the drugs, the other malfeasance that was reported there. What Ken would admit, and I would admit, and what we both have to take responsibility for, is that we did not fully change the *institutional* conflicts that were inherent in that office. If you ask why did we not get that done, the very simple answer is that

this is a big government with a lot of people, and changing bureaucracies and agencies is a time-consuming process. We just didn't get to it fast enough.

Having said that, the person who was put in charge of MMS was fired. We brought in Michael Bromwich, who by every account is somebody who is serious about cleaning up that agency. We are committed to making sure that that place works the way it is supposed to. But when I have somebody like Ken Salazar, who has been an outstanding public servant, who takes this stuff seriously, who bleeds when he sees what was happening in the Gulf, and had started on a path of reform but just didn't get there as fast on every aspect of it as needed to be, I had to just let him know, "You're accountable, you're responsible, I expect you to change it." I have confidence that he can change it, and I think he's in the process of doing so.

*James Hansen, the NASA scientist who is perhaps the most respected authority on global warming, says that climate change is the predominant moral issue of the 21st century, comparable to slavery faced by Lincoln and the response to Nazism faced by Churchill. Do you agree with that statement?*

What I would agree with is that climate change has the potential to have devastating effects on people around the globe, and we've got to do something about it. In order to do something about it, we're going to have to mobilize domestically, and we're going to have to mobilize internationally.

During the past two years, we've not made as much progress as I wanted to make when I was sworn into office. It is very hard to make progress on these issues in the midst of a huge economic crisis, because the natural inclination around the world is to say, "You know what? That may be a huge problem, but right now what's a really big problem is 10 percent unemployment," or "What's a really big problem is that our businesses



can't get loans." That diverted attention from what I consider to be an urgent priority. The House of Representatives made an attempt to deal with the issue in a serious way. It wasn't perfect, but it was serious. We could not get 60 votes for a comparable approach in the Senate.

One of my top priorities next year is to have an energy policy that begins to address all facets of our overreliance on fossil fuels. We may end up having to do it in chunks, as opposed to some sort of comprehensive omnibus legislation. But we're going to stay on this because it is good for our economy, it's good for our national security, and, ultimately, it's good for our environment.

Understand, though, that even in the absence of legislation, we took steps over the past two years that have made a significant difference. I will give you one example, and this is an example where sometimes I think the progressive community just pock-ets whatever we do, takes it for granted, and then asks, "Well, why didn't you get this done?"

We instituted the first increase in fuel-efficiency standards in this country in 30 years. It used to be that California would have some very rigorous rule, and then other states would have much weaker ones. Now we've got one rule. Not only that, it used to be that trucks weren't covered, and there were all kinds of loopholes – that's how SUVs were out there getting eight miles a gallon. Now everybody's regulated – not only cars, but trucks. We did this with the agreement of the auto industry, which had never agreed to it before, we did it with the auto workers, who had never agreed to it before. We are taking the equivalent of millions of cars off the road, when it comes to the amount of greenhouse gases that are produced.

Is it enough? Absolutely not. The progress that we're making on renewable energy, the progress that we're making on retrofitting buildings and making sure that we are reducing electricity use – all those things, cumulatively, if we stay on it over the next several years, will allow us to meet the target that I set, which would be around a 17 percent reduction in our greenhouse gases.

But we're going to have to do a lot more than that. When I talk to [Energy Secretary] Steven Chu, who, by the way, was an unsung hero in the Gulf oil spill – this guy went down and helped design the way to plug that hole with BP engineers – nobody's a bigger champion for the cause of reducing climate change than he is. When I ask him how we are going to solve this problem internationally, what he'll tell you is that we can get about a third of this done through efficiencies and existing technologies, we can get an additional chunk through some sort of pricing in carbon, but ultimately we're going to need some technological breakthroughs. So the investments we're making in research and development around clean energy are also going to be important if we're going to be able to get all the way there. Am I satisfied with what we've gotten done? Absolutely not.

*Do you see a point at which you're going to throw the whole weight of the presidency behind this, like you did on health care or financial reform?*

Yes. Not only can I foresee it, but I am committed to making sure that we get an energy policy that makes sense for the country and that helps us grow at the same time as it deals with climate change in a serious way. I am just as committed to getting immigration reform done.

I've been here two years, guys. And one of the things that I just try to remember is that if we have accomplished 70 percent of what we committed to in the campaign, historic legislation, and we've got 30 percent of it undone – well, that's what the next two years is for, or maybe the next six.

Understandably, everybody has a great sense of urgency about these issues. But one of the things that I constantly want to counsel my friends is to keep the long view in mind. On social issues, something like "don't ask, don't tell." Here, I've got the Secretary of Defense and the Joint Chiefs of Staff both committed to changing the policy. That's a big deal.

*You get credit for that.*

Now, I am also the commander in chief of an armed force that is in the midst of one war and wrapping up another one. So I don't think it's too much to ask, to say "Let's do this in an orderly way" – to ensure, by the way, that gays and lesbians who are serving honorably in our armed forces aren't subject to harassment and bullying and a whole bunch of other stuff once we implement the policy. I use that as an example because on each of these areas, even those where we did not get some grand legislative victory, we have made progress. We have moved in the right direction.

When people start being concerned about, "You haven't closed Guantánamo yet," I say, listen, that's something I wanted to get done by now, and I haven't gotten done because of recalcitrance from the other side. Frankly, it's an easy issue to demagogue. But what I have been able to do is to ban torture. I have been able to make sure that our intelligence agencies and our military operate under a core set of principles and rules that are true to our traditions of due process. People will say, "I don't know – you've got your Justice Department out there that's still using the state-secrets doctrine to defend against some of these previous actions." Well, I gave very specific instructions to the Department of Justice. What I've said is that we are not going to use a shroud of secrecy to excuse illegal

behavior on our part. On the other hand, there are occasions where I've got to protect operatives in the field, their sources and their methods, because if those were revealed in open court, they could be subject to very great danger. There are going to be circumstances in which, yes, I can't have every operation that we're engaged in to deal with a very real terrorist threat published in *ROLLING STONE*.

These things don't happen overnight. But we're moving in the right direction, and that's what people have to keep in mind.

*What has surprised you the most about these first two years in office? What advice would you give your successor about the first two years?*

Over the past two years, what I probably anticipated but you don't fully appreciate until you're in the job, is something I said earlier, which is if a problem is easy, it doesn't hit my desk. If there's an obvious solution, it never arrives here – somebody else has solved it a long time ago. The issues that cross my desk are hard and complicated, and oftentimes involve the clash not of right and wrong, but of two rights. And you're having to balance and reconcile against competing values that are equally legitimate.

What I'm very proud of is that we have, as an administration, kept our moral compass, even as we've worked through

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these very difficult issues. Doesn't mean we haven't made mistakes, but I think we've moved the country in a profoundly better direction just in the past two years.

*What music have you been listening to lately? What have you discovered, what speaks to you these days?*

My iPod now has about 2,000 songs, and it is a source of great pleasure to me. I am probably still more heavily weighted toward the music of my childhood than I am the new stuff. There's still a lot of Stevie Wonder, a lot of Bob Dylan, a lot of Rolling Stones, a lot of R&B, a lot of Miles Davis and John Coltrane. Those are the old standards.

A lot of classical music. I'm not a big opera buff in terms of going to opera, but there are days where Maria Callas is exactly what I need.

Thanks to Reggie [Love, the president's personal aide], my rap palate has greatly improved. Jay-Z used to be sort of what

you want Bob Dylan, right? You don't want him to be all cheesin' and grinnin' with you. You want him to be a little skeptical about the whole enterprise. So that was a real treat.

Having Paul McCartney here was also incredible. He's just a very gracious guy. When he was up there singing "Michelle" to Michelle, I was thinking to myself, "Imagine when Michelle was growing up, this little girl on the South Side of Chicago, from a working-class family." The notion that someday one of the Beatles would be singing his song to her in the White House – you couldn't imagine something like that.

*Did you cry?*

Whenever I think about my wife, she can choke me up. My wife and my kids, they'll get to me.

*[Signaled by his aides, the president brings the interview to a close and leaves the Oval Office. A moment later, however, he returns to the office and says that he has one more thing to add.*

*He speaks with intensity and passion, repeatedly stabbing the air with his finger.]*

One closing remark that I want to make: It is inexcusable for any Democrat or progressive right now to stand on the sidelines in this midterm election. There may be complaints about us not having gotten certain things done, not fast enough, making certain legislative compromises. But right now, we've got a choice between a Republican Party that has moved to the right of George Bush and is looking to lock in the same policies that got us into these disasters in the first place, versus an administration that, with some admitted warts, has been the most successful administration in a generation in moving progressive agendas forward.

The idea that we've got a lack of enthusiasm in the Democratic base, that people are sitting on their hands complaining, is just irresponsible.

Everybody out there has to be thinking about what's at stake in this election and if they want to

move forward over the next two years or six years or 10 years on key issues like climate change, key issues like how we restore a sense of equity and optimism to middle-class families who have seen their incomes decline by five percent over the last decade. If we want the kind of country that respects civil rights and civil liberties, we'd better fight in this election. And right now, we are getting outspent eight to one by these 527s that the Roberts court says can spend with impunity without disclosing where their money's coming from. In every single one of these congressional districts, you are seeing these independent organizations outspend political parties and the candidates by, as I said, factors of four to one, five to one, eight to one, 10 to one.

We have to get folks off the sidelines. People need to shake off this lethargy, people need to buck up. Bringing about change is hard – that's what I said during the campaign. It has been hard, and we've got some lumps to show for it. But if people now want to take their ball and go home, that tells me folks weren't serious in the first place.

If you're serious, now's exactly the time that people have to step up.



## THE WICKED MESSENGER

Bob Dylan at the White House on February 9th. "He was exactly as you'd expect," the president recalls. "You want him to be a little skeptical about the whole enterprise."

predominated, but now I've got a little Nas and a little Lil Wayne and some other stuff, but I would not claim to be an expert. Malia and Sasha are now getting old enough to where they start hipping me to things. Music is still a great source of joy and occasional solace in the midst of what can be some difficult days.

*You had Bob Dylan here. How did that go?*

Here's what I love about Dylan: He was exactly as you'd expect he would be. He wouldn't come to the rehearsal; usually, all these guys are practicing before the set in the evening. He didn't want to take a picture with me; usually all the talent is dying to take a picture with me and Michelle before the show, but he didn't show up to that. He came in and played "The Times They Are A-Changin'." A beautiful rendition. The guy is so steeped in this stuff that he can just come up with some new arrangement, and the song sounds completely different. Finishes the song, steps off the stage – I'm sitting right in the front row – comes up, shakes my hand, sort of tips his head, gives me just a little grin, and then leaves. And that was it – then he left. That was our only interaction with him. And I thought: That's how





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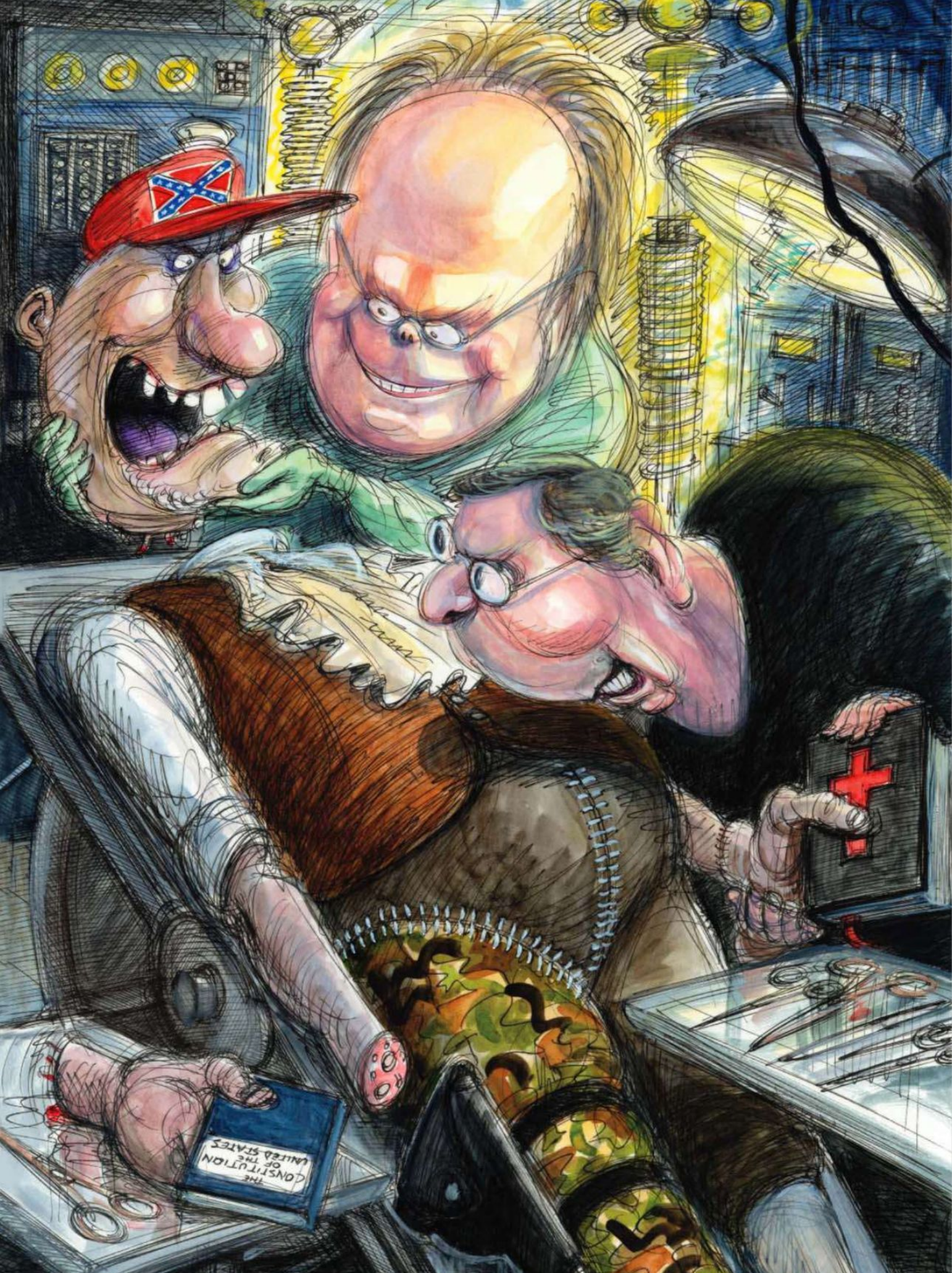
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# TEA & CRACKERS

How corporate interests and Republican insiders built the Tea Party monster

By MATT TAIBBI

IT'S TAKEN THREE TRIPS TO KENTUCKY, BUT I'M FINALLY getting my Tea Party epiphany exactly where you'd expect: at a Sarah Palin rally. The red-hot mama of American exceptionalism has flown in to speak at something called the National Quartet Convention in Louisville, a gospel-music hoedown in a giant convention center filled with thousands of elderly white Southerners. Palin – who earlier this morning held a closed-door fundraiser for Rand Paul, the Tea Party champion running for the U.S. Senate – is railing against a GOP establishment that has just seen Tea Partiers oust entrenched Republican hacks in Delaware and New York. The dingbat revolution, it seems, is nigh.

"We're shaking up the good ol' boys," Palin chortles, to the best applause her aging crowd can muster. She then issues an oft-repeated warning (her speeches are usually a tired succession of half-coherent one-liners dumped on ravenous audiences like chum to sharks) to Republican insiders who underestimated the power of the Tea Party Death Star. "Buck up," she says, "or stay in the truck."

*Stay in what truck? I wonder. What the hell does that even mean?*

Scanning the thousands of hopped-up faces in the crowd, I am immediately struck by two things. One is that there isn't a single black person here. The other is the truly awesome quantity of medical hardware: Seemingly every third per-

son in the place is sucking oxygen from a tank or propping their giant atrophied glutes on motorized wheelchair-scooters. As Palin launches into her Ronald Reagan impression – "Government's not the solution! Government's the problem!" – the person sitting next to me leans over and explains.

"The scooters are because of Medicare," he whispers helpfully. "They have these commercials down here: 'You won't even have to pay for your scooter! Medicare will pay!' Practically everyone in Kentucky has one."

A hall full of elderly white people in Medicare-paid scooters, railing against government spending and imagining themselves revolutionaries as they cheer

on the vice-presidential puppet hand-picked by the GOP establishment. If there exists a better snapshot of everything the Tea Party represents, I can't imagine it.

After Palin wraps up, I race to the parking lot in search of departing Medicare-motor-scooter conservatives. I come upon an elderly couple, Janice and David Wheelock, who are fairly itching to share their views.

"I'm anti-spending and anti-government," crows David, as scooter-bound Janice looks on. "The welfare state is out of control."

"OK," I say. "And what do you do for a living?"

"Me?" he says proudly. "Oh, I'm a property appraiser. Have been my whole life."

I frown. "Are either of you on Medicare?"

Silence: Then Janice, a nice enough woman, it seems, slowly raises her hand, offering a faint smile, as if to say, *You got me!*

"Let me get this straight," I say to David. "You've been picking up a check from the government for decades, as a *tax assessor*, and your wife is on Medicare. How can you complain about the welfare state?"

"Well," he says, "there's a lot of people on welfare who don't deserve it. Too many people are living off the government."

"But," I protest, "*you* live off the government. And have been your whole life!"



"Yeah," he says, "but I don't make very much."

Vast forests have already been sacrificed to the public debate about the Tea Party: what it is, what it means, where it's going. But after lengthy study of the phenomenon, I've concluded that the whole miserable narrative boils down to one stark fact: They're full of shit. All of them. At the voter level, the Tea Party is a movement that purports to be furious about government spending – only the reality is that the vast majority of its members are former Bush supporters who yawned through two terms of record deficits and spent the past two electoral cycles frothing not about spending but about John Kerry's medals and Barack Obama's Sixties associations. The average Tea Partier is sincerely against government spending – with the exception of the money spent on *them*. In fact, their lack of embarrassment when it comes to collecting government largesse is key to understanding what this movement is all about – and nowhere do we see that dynamic as clearly as here in Kentucky, where Rand Paul is barreling toward the Senate with the aid of conservative icons like Palin.

Early in his campaign, Dr. Paul, the son of the uncompromising libertarian hero Ron Paul, denounced Medicare as "socialized medicine." But this spring, when confronted with the idea of reducing Medicare payments to doctors like himself – half of his patients are on Medicare – he balked. This candidate, a man ostensibly so against government power in all its forms that he wants to gut the Americans With Disabilities Act and abolish the departments of Education and Energy, was unwilling to reduce his own government compensation, for a very logical reason. "Physicians," he said, "should be allowed to make a comfortable living."

Those of us who might have expected Paul's purist followers to abandon him in droves have been disappointed; Paul is now the clear favorite to win in November. *Ha, ha, you thought we actually gave a shit about spending, joke's on you.* That's because the Tea Party doesn't really care about issues – it's about something deep down and psychological, something that can't be answered by political compromise or fundamental changes in policy. At root, the Tea Party is nothing more than a them-versus-us thing. They know who they are, and they know who *we* are ("radical leftists" is the term they prefer), and they're

coming for us on Election Day, no matter what we do – and, it would seem, no matter what their own leaders like Rand Paul do.

In the Tea Party narrative, victory at the polls means a new American revolution, one that will "take our country back" from everyone they disapprove of. But what they don't realize is, there's a catch: This is America, and we have an entrenched oligarchical system in place that insulates us all from any meaningful political change. The Tea Party today is being pitched in the media as this great threat to the GOP; in reality, the Tea Party *is* the GOP. What few elements of the movement aren't yet under the control of the Republican Party soon will be, and even if a few genuine Tea Party candidates sneak through, it's only a matter of time before the uprising as a

THE ORIGINAL TEA PARTY was launched by a real opponent of the political establishment – Rand Paul's father, Ron, whose grass-roots rallies for his 2008 presidential run were called by that name. The elder Paul will object to this characterization, but what he represents is something of a sacred role in American culture: the principled crackpot. He's a libertarian, but he means it. Sure, he takes typical, if exaggerated, Republican stances against taxes and regulation, but he also opposes federal drug laws ("The War on Drugs is totally out of control") and "All drugs should be decriminalized"), Bush's interventionist wars in the Middle East ("We cannot spread our greatness and our goodness through the



#### THE CHOSEN ONE

Rand Paul, the Tea Party's candidate in Kentucky, now takes his marching orders from the likes of Karl Rove. "I feel like I don't know him anymore," says a former campaign worker.

whole gets castrated, just like every grass-roots movement does in this country. Its leaders will be bought off and sucked into the two-party bureaucracy, where its platform will be whittled down until the only things left are those that the GOP's campaign contributors want anyway: top-bracket tax breaks, free trade and financial deregulation.

The rest of it – the sweeping cuts to federal spending, the clampdown on bailouts, the rollback of *Roe v. Wade* – will die on the vine as one Tea Party leader after another gets seduced by the Republican Party and retrained for the revolutionary cause of voting down taxes for Goldman Sachs executives. It's all on display here in Kentucky, the unofficial capital of the Tea Party movement, where, ha, ha, the joke turns out to be on them: Rand Paul, their hero, is a fake.

barrel of a gun") and the Patriot Act; he even called for legalized prostitution and online gambling.

Paul had a surprisingly good showing as a fringe candidate in 2008, and he may run again, but he'll never get any further than the million primary votes he got last time for one simple reason, which happens to be the same reason many campaign-trail reporters like me liked him: He's honest. An anti-war, pro-legalization Republican won't ever play in Peoria, which is why in 2008 Paul's supporters were literally outside the tent at most GOP events, their candidate pissed on by a party hierarchy that preferred Wall Street-friendly phonies like Mitt Romney and John McCain. Paul returned the favor, blasting both parties as indistinguishable "Republi-



crats" in his presciently titled book, *The Revolution*. The pre-Obama "Tea Parties" were therefore peopled by young anti-war types and libertarian intellectuals who were as turned off by George W. Bush and Karl Rove as they were by liberals and Democrats.

The failure of the Republican Party to invite the elder Paul into the tent of power did not mean, however, that it didn't see the utility of borrowing his insurgent rhetoric and parts of his platform for Tea Party 2.0. This second-generation Tea Party came into being a month after Barack Obama moved into the Oval Office, when CNBC windbag Rick Santelli went on the air to denounce one of Obama's bailout programs and called for "tea parties" to protest. The impetus for Santelli's rant wasn't the billions in taxpayer money being spent to prop up the bad mortgage debts and unsecured derivatives losses of irresponsible investors like Goldman Sachs and AIG – massive government bailouts supported, incidentally, by Sarah Palin and many other prominent Repub-

ing themselves fed up with wasteful government spending. From the outset, the events were organized and financed by the conservative wing of the Republican Party, which was quietly working to co-opt the new movement and deploy it to the GOP's advantage. Taking the lead was former House majority leader Dick Armey, who as chair of a group called FreedomWorks helped coordinate Tea Party rallies across the country. A succession of Republican Party insiders and money guys make up the guts of FreedomWorks: Its key members include billionaire turd Steve Forbes and former Republican National Committee senior economist Matt Kibbe.

Prior to the Tea Party phenomenon, FreedomWorks was basically just an AstroTurfing-lobbying outfit whose earlier work included taking money from Verizon to oppose telecommunications regulation. Now the organization's sights were set much higher: In the wake of a monstrous economic crash caused by grotesque abuses in unregulated areas of the financial-services industry, FreedomWorks

include not only hardcore libertarians left over from the original Ron Paul "Tea Parties," but gun-rights advocates, fundamentalist Christians, pseudomilitia types like the Oath Keepers (a group of law-enforcement and military professionals who have vowed to disobey "unconstitutional" orders) and mainstream Republicans who have simply lost faith in their party. It's a mistake to cast the Tea Party as anything like a unified, cohesive movement – which makes them easy prey for the very people they should be aiming their pitchforks at. A loose definition of the Tea Party might be millions of pissed-off white people sent chasing after Mexicans on Medicaid by the handful of banks and investment firms who advertise on Fox and CNBC.

The individuals in the Tea Party may come from very different walks of life, but most of them have a few things in common. After nearly a year of talking with Tea Party members from Nevada to New Jersey, I can count on one hand the key elements I expect to hear in nearly every in-

## TEA PARTY CHAMPION

Rand Paul was transformed from insurgent outsider to establishment stooge in the space of almost exactly one year.

licans. No, what had Santelli all worked up was Obama's "Homeowner Affordability and Stability Plan," a \$75 billion program less than a hundredth the size of all the bank bailouts. This was one of the few bailout programs designed to directly benefit individual victims of the financial crisis; the money went to homeowners, many of whom were minorities, who were close to foreclosure. While the big bank bailouts may have been incomprehensible to ordinary voters, here was something that Middle America had no problem grasping: The financial crisis was caused by those lazy minorities next door who bought houses they couldn't afford – and now the government was going to bail them out.

"How many of you people want to pay your neighbor's mortgage that has an extra bathroom and can't pay their bills? Raise your hand!" Santelli roared in a broadcast from the floor of the Chicago Board of Trade. Why, he later asked, doesn't America reward people who "carry the water instead of drink the water?"

Suddenly, tens of thousands of Republicans who had been conspicuously silent during George Bush's gargantuan spending on behalf of defense contractors and hedge-fund gazillionaires showed up at Tea Party rallies across the nation, declar-

– which took money from companies like mortgage lender MetLife – had the opportunity to persuade millions of ordinary Americans to take up arms against, among other things, Wall Street reform.

Joining them in the fight was another group, Americans for Prosperity, which was funded in part by the billionaire David Koch, whose Koch Industries is the second-largest privately held company in America. In addition to dealing in plastics, chemicals and petroleum, Koch has direct interests in commodities trading and financial services. He also has a major stake in pushing for deregulation, as his companies have been fined multiple times by the government, including a 1999 case in which Koch Industries was held to have stolen oil from federal lands, lying about oil purchases some 24,000 times.

So how does a group of billionaire businessmen and corporations get a bunch of broke Middle American white people to lobby for lower taxes for the rich and deregulation of Wall Street? That turns out to be easy. Beneath the surface, the Tea Party is little more than a weird and disorderly mob, a federation of distinct and often competing strains of conservatism that have been unable to coalesce around a leader of their own choosing. Its rallies

interview. One: Every single one of them was that exceptional Republican who *did* protest the spending in the Bush years, and not one of them is the hypocrite who only took to the streets when a black Democratic president launched an emergency stimulus program. ("Not me – I was protesting!" is a common exclamation.) Two: Each and every one of them is the only person in America who has ever read the Constitution or watched *Schoolhouse Rock*. (Here they have guidance from Armey, who explains that the problem with "people who do not cherish America the way we do" is that "they did not read the Federalist Papers.") Three: They are all furious at the implication that race is a factor in their political views – despite the fact that they blame the financial crisis on poor black homeowners, spend months on end engrossed by reports about how the New Black Panthers want to kill "cracker babies," support politicians who think the Civil Rights Act of 1964 was an overreach of government power, tried to enact South African-style immigration laws in Arizona and obsess over Charlie Rangel, ACORN and Barack Obama's birth certificate. Four: In fact, some of their best friends are black! (Reporters in Kentucky invented a game called "White Male Liberty Pa-



triot Bingo,” checking off a box every time a Tea Partier mentions a black friend.) And five: Everyone who disagrees with them is a radical leftist who hates America.

It would be inaccurate to say the Tea Partiers are racists. What they are, in truth, are narcissists. They’re completely blind to how offensive the very nature of their rhetoric is to the rest of the country. I’m an ordinary middle-aged guy who pays taxes and lives in the suburbs with his wife and dog – and I’m a radical communist? I don’t love my country? I’m a redcoat? Fuck you! These are the kinds of thoughts that go through your head as you listen to Tea Partiers expound at awesome length upon their cultural victimhood, surrounded as they are by America-haters like you and me or, in the case of foreign-born president Barack Obama, people who are literally not Americans in the way they are.

It’s not like the Tea Partiers hate black people. It’s just that they’re shockingly willing to believe the appalling horseshit fantasy about how white people in the age of Obama are some kind of oppressed mi-

nation to challenge Harry Reid this fall. Others are opportunistic incumbents like Jan Brewer, the Arizona governor who reversed a dip in the polls by greenlighting laws to allow police to stop anyone in a Cypress Hill T-shirt. And a few are newcomers like Joe Miller, the Alaska lawyer and Sarah Palin favorite who whipped Republican lifer Lisa Murkowski in the state’s Senate primary. But the champion of champions has always been Rand Paul, who as the son of the movement’s would-be ideological founder was poised to become the George W. Bush figure in the Tea Party narrative, the inheritor of the divine calling.

SINCE PAUL WON THE GOP PRIMARY in Kentucky, the Tea Party has entered a whole new phase of self-deception. Now that a few of these so-called “outsider” politicians have ridden voter anger to victories over entrenched incumbents, they are being courted and turned by the very party insiders they once campaigned against. It hasn’t happened everywhere yet, and in

In the early days of his campaign, by virtually all accounts, Paul was the real thing – expansive, willing to talk openly to anyone and everyone, and totally unapologetic about his political views, which ranged from bold and nuanced to flat-out batshit crazy. But he wasn’t going to change for anyone: For young Dr. Paul, as for his father, this was more about message than victory; actually winning wasn’t even on his radar. “He used to talk about how he’d be lucky if he got 10 percent,” recalls Josh Koch, a former campaign volunteer for Paul who has broken with the candidate.

Before he entered the campaign, Paul had an extensive record of loony comments, often made at his father’s rallies, which, to put it generously, were a haven for people gifted at the art of mining the Internet for alternate theories of reality. In a faint echo of the racially charged anti-immigrant paranoia that has become a trademark of the Tea Party, both Paul and his father preached about the apocalyptic arrival of a “10-lane colossus” NAFTA superhighway between the U.S. and Mex-

## THE TEA PARTY IS MILLIONS of pissed-off white people sent chasing after Mexicans on Medicaid by the banks that advertise on Fox and CNBC.

nority. That may not be racism, but it is incredibly, earth-shatteringly stupid. I hear this theme over and over – as I do on a recent trip to northern Kentucky, where I decide to stick on a Rand Paul button and sit in on a Tea Party event at a local amusement park. Before long, a group of about a half-dozen Tea Partiers begin speculating about how Obamacare will force emergency-room doctors to consult “death panels” that will evaluate your worth as a human being before deciding to treat you.

“They’re going to look at your age, your vocation in life, your health, your income...” says a guy active in the Northern Kentucky Tea Party.

“Your race?” I ask.

“Probably,” he says.

“White males need not apply,” says another Tea Partier.

“Like everything else, the best thing you can do is be an illegal alien,” says a third. “Then they won’t ask you any questions.”

An amazing number of Tea Partiers actually believe this stuff, and in the past year or so a host of little-known politicians have scored electoral upsets riding this kind of yahoo paranoia. Some are career Republican politicians like Sharron Angle, the former Nevada assemblywoman who seized on the Tea Party to win the GOP nomi-

some states it may not happen at all; a few rogue politicians, like Christine O’Donnell in Delaware, might still squeak into office over the protests of the Republican establishment. But in Kentucky, home of the Chosen One, the sellout came fast and hard.

Paul was transformed from insurgent outsider to establishment stooge in the space of almost exactly one year, making a journey that with eerie cinematic precision began and ended in the same place: *The Rachel Maddow Show*. When he first appeared on the air with the MSNBC leading lady and noted Bible Belt Antichrist to announce his Senate candidacy in May 2009, Paul came out blazing with an inclusive narrative that seemingly offered a realistic alternative for political malcontents on both sides of the aisle. He talked with pride about how his father’s anti-war stance attracted young voters (mentioning one Paul supporter in New Hampshire who had “long hair and a lip ring”). Even the choice of Maddow as a forum was clearly intended to signal that his campaign was an anti-establishment, crossover effort. “Bringing our message to those who do not yet align themselves as Republicans is precisely how we grow as a party,” Paul said, explaining the choice.

ico, which the elder Paul said would be the width of several football fields and come complete with fiber-optic cable, railroads, and oil and gas pipelines, all with the goal of forging a single American-Mexican state. Young Paul stood with Dad on that one – after all, he had seen Mexico’s former president on YouTube talking about the Amero, a proposed North American currency. “I guarantee you,” he warned, “it’s one of their long-term goals to have one sort of borderless, mass continent.” And Paul’s anti-interventionist, anti-war stance was so far out, it made MoveOn look like a detachment of the Third Marines. “Our national security,” he declared in 2007, “is not threatened by Iran having one nuclear weapon.”

With views like these, Paul spent the early days of his campaign looking for publicity anywhere he could get it. One of his early appearances was on the online talk show of noted 9/11 Truth buffoon and conspiracy theorist Alex Jones. The two men spent the broadcast exchanging lunatic fantasies about shadowy government forces, with Paul at one point insisting that should Obama’s climate bill pass, “we will have an army of armed EPA agents – thousands of them” who would raid private homes to enforce energy-efficiency stan-



dards. Paul presented himself as an ally to Jones in the fringe crusade against establishment forces at the top of society, saying the leaders of the two parties “don’t believe in anything” and “get pushed around by the New World Order types.”

Unsurprisingly, the GOP froze Paul out, attempting to exclude him from key party gatherings in Kentucky like the Fayette County Republican Party Picnic and the Boone County Republican Party Christmas Gala. “We had the entire Republican establishment of the state and the nation against us,” says David Adams, who mobilized the first Tea Party meetings in Kentucky before serving as Paul’s campaign manager during the primaries.

The state’s Republican establishment, it must be said, is among the most odious in the nation. Its two senators – party kingmaker and Senate minority leader Mitch McConnell and mentally disappearing ex-jock Jim Bunning – collectively rep-

in August 2009, when McConnell decided to throw a fancy fundraiser in Washington for the national GOP’s preferred candidate, Trey Grayson. Attended by 17 Republican senators who voted for the TARP bailout, the event was dubbed the “Bailout Ball” by Paul’s people. Paul went a step further, pledging not to accept contributions from any senator who voted to hand taxpayer money over to Wall Street. “A primary focus of my campaign is that we need Republicans in office who will have the courage to say no to federal bailouts of big business,” he declared.

The anti-establishment rhetoric was a big hit. Excluded from local campaign events by the GOP, Paul took his act to the airwaves, doing national TV appearances that sent his campaign soaring with Tea Party voters. “We were being shut out of a lot of opportunities in the state, so you go with what is available to you,” says Adams. “And what was available was television.”

orably, she hounded him about his belief that the Civil Rights Act of 1964 was an overreach of government power. The money exchange:

MADDOW: Do you think that a private business has the right to say we don’t serve black people?

PAUL: Yeah. I’m not in favor of any discrimination of any form. But what about freedom of speech? Should we limit speech from people we find abhorrent? Should we limit racists from speaking?

Paul was pilloried as a racist in the national press. Within a day he was completely reversing himself, telling CNN, “I think that there was an overriding problem in the South so big that it did require federal intervention in the Sixties.” Meanwhile, he was sticking his foot in his mouth on other issues, blasting the Americans With Disabilities Act and denouncing Barack Obama’s criticism of British disaster merchant BP as “un-American.”

Paul’s libertarian coming-out party was such a catastrophe – the three gaffes came within days of each other – that he immediately jumped into the protective arms of Mitch McConnell and the Republican Party. “I think he’s said quite enough for the time being in terms of national press coverage,” McConnell said, explaining why Paul had been prevaricated upon by the party to cancel an appearance on *Meet the Press*. Some news outlets reported that Paul canceled the appearance after a call from Karl Rove to Adams, who concedes that he did speak with Rove around that time.

Soon after, McConnell threw yet another “Bailout Ball” fundraiser in Washington – only this time it was for Rand Paul. The candidate who just a year before had pledged not to accept money from TARP supporters was now romping in bed with those same politicians. When pressed for an explanation of Paul’s about-face on the bailouts, Adams offers an incredibly frank admission. “When he said he would not take money from people who voted for the bank bailout, he also said, in the same breath, that our first phone call after the primary would be to Senator Mitch McConnell,” says Adams. “Making fun of the Bailout Ball was just for the primary.”

With all the “just for the primary” stuff out of the way, Paul’s platform began to rapidly “evolve.” Previously opposed to erecting a fence on the Mexican border, Paul suddenly came out in favor of one. He had been flatly opposed to all farm subsidies; faced with having to win a general election in a state that receives more than



#### PULLING THE STRINGS

Former Republican majority leader Dick Armey (left) and oil billionaire David Koch have been instrumental in co-opting the Tea Party and deploying it to the GOP’s advantage.

resent everything that most sane people despise about the modern GOP. McConnell is the ultimate D.C. insider, the kind of Republican even Republicans should wonder about, a man who ranks among the top 10 senators when it comes to loading up on pork spending. With his needle nose, pursed lips and prim reading glasses, he’s a proud wearer of the “I’m an intellectual, but I’m also a narrow-minded prick” look made famous by George Will; politically his great passion is whoring for Wall Street, his most recent triumph coming when he convinced Republican voters that a proposed \$50 billion fund to be collected from big banks was actually a *bailout* of those same banks. Bunning, meanwhile, goes with the “dumb and unashamed” style; in more than a decade of service, his sole newsworthy accomplishment came when he said his Italian-American opponent looked like one of Saddam’s sons.

Paul’s animus toward the state’s Republican overlords never seemed greater than

In the primary almost a year later, Paul stomped Grayson, sending shock waves through the national party. The Republican candidate backed by the party’s Senate minority leader had just received an ass-whipping by a Tea Party kook, a man who tried to excuse BP’s greed-crazed fuck-up in the Gulf on the grounds that “sometimes accidents happen.” Paul celebrated his big win by going back to where he’d begun his campaign, *The Rachel Maddow Show*, where he made a big show of joyously tearing off his pseudoliberal underpants for the whole world to see – and that’s where everything changed for him.

In their first interview, Maddow had softballed Paul and played nice, treating him like what he was at the time – an interesting fringe candidate with the potential to put a burr in Mitch McConnell’s ass. But now, Paul was a real threat to seize a seat in the U.S. Senate, so Maddow took the gloves off and forced him to explain some of his nuttier positions. Most mem-



\$265 million a year in subsidies, Paul reversed himself and explained that he was only against subsidies to “dead farmers” and those earning more than \$2 million. Paul also went on the air with Fox News reptile Sean Hannity and insisted that he differed significantly from the Libertarian Party, now speaking more favorably about, among other things, judicious troop deployments overseas.

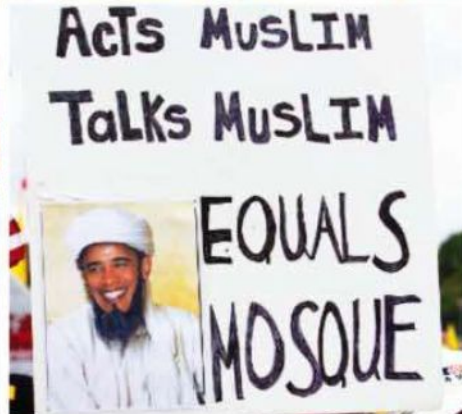
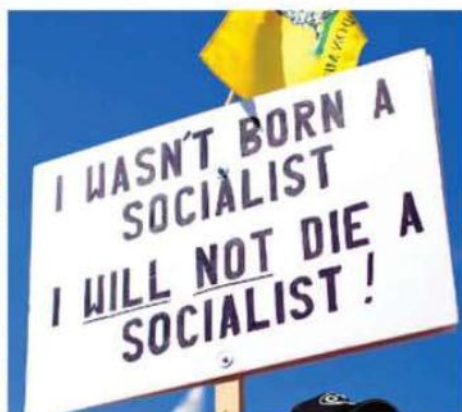
Beyond that, Paul just flat-out stopped talking about his views – particularly the ones that don’t jibe with right-wing and Christian crowds, like curtailing the federal prohibition on drugs. Who knows if that had anything to do with hawkish Chris-

can Party establishment. But it isn’t young intellectuals like Koch who will usher Paul into the U.S. Senate in the general election; it’s those huge crowds of pissed-off old people who dig Sarah Palin and Fox News and call themselves Tea Partiers. And those people really don’t pay attention to specifics too much. Like dogs, they listen to tone of voice and emotional attitude.

Outside the Palin rally in September, I ask an elderly Rand supporter named Blanche Phelps if she’s concerned that her candidate is now sucking up to the same Republican Party hacks he once campaigned against. Is she bothered that he

picts a half-naked Adam and Eve sitting in the bush, cheerfully keeping house next to dinosaurs – which, according to creationist myth, not only lived alongside humans but were peaceful vegetarians until Adam partook of the forbidden fruit. It’s hard to imagine a more telling demonstration of this particular demographic’s unmatched ability to believe just about anything.

Even more disturbing is an exhibit designed to show how the world has changed since the Scopes trial eradicated religion from popular culture. Visitors to the museum enter a darkened urban scene full of graffiti and garbage, and through a series of windows view video scenes of fam-



#### SIGNS OF DISBELIEF

Tea Partiers vehemently deny that race plays a factor in their political views – even though they are obsessed with minority homeowners, illegal immigrants, Charlie Rangel, ACORN and Barack Obama’s birth certificate.

tian icon Sarah Palin agreeing to headline fundraisers for Paul, but a huge chunk of the candidate’s libertarian ideals have taken a long vacation.

“When he was pulling no punches, when he was reciting his best stuff, I felt like I knew him,” says Koch, the former campaign volunteer who now works with the Libertarian Party in Kentucky. “But now, with Mitch McConnell and Karl Rove calling the shots, I feel like I don’t know him anymore.”

Hardcore young libertarians like Koch – the kind of people who were outside the tent during the elder Paul’s presidential run in 2008 – cared enough about the issues to jump off the younger Paul’s bandwagon when he cozied up to the Republi-

has changed his mind on bailouts and abortion and American interventionism and a host of other issues?

Blanche shrugs. “Maybe,” she suggests helpfully, “he got saved.”

**B**URIED DEEP IN THE ANUS OF the Bible Belt, in a little place called Petersburg, Kentucky, is one of the world’s most extraordinary tourist attractions: the Creation Museum, a kind of natural-history museum for people who believe the Earth is 6,000 years old. When you visit this impressively massive monument to fundamentalist Christian thought, you get a mind-blowing glimpse into the modern conservative worldview. One exhibit de-

ilies in a state of collapse. A teenager, rolling a giant doobie as his God-fearing little brother looks on in horror, surfs porn on the Web instead of reading the Bible. (“A Wide World of Women!” the older brother chuckles.) A girl stares at her home pregnancy test and says into the telephone, “My parents are not going to know!” As you go farther into the exhibit, you find a wooden door, into which an eerie inscription has been carved: THE WORLD’S NOT SAFE ANYMORE.

Staff members tell me Rand Paul recently visited the museum after-hours. This means nothing in itself, of course, but it serves as an interesting metaphor to explain Paul’s success in Kentucky. The Tea Party is many things at once, but one way



or another, it almost always comes back to a campaign against that unsafe urban hellscape of godless liberalism we call our modern world. Paul's platform is ultimately about turning back the clock, returning America to the moment of her constitutional creation, when the federal bureaucracy was nonexistent and men were free to roam the Midwestern plains strip-mining coal and erecting office buildings without wheelchair access. Some people pick on Paul for his humorously extreme back-to-Hobbesian-nature platform (a Louisville teachers' union worker named Bill Allison follows Paul around in a "NeanderPaul" cave-man costume shouting things like "Abolish all laws!" and "BP just made mistakes!"), but it's clear when you talk to Paul supporters that what they dig most is his implicit promise to turn back time, an idea that in Kentucky has some fairly obvious implications.

At a Paul fundraiser in northern Kentucky, I strike up a conversation with one Lloyd Rogers, a retired judge in his 70s who is introducing the candidate at the

of the entire Western world. But all that history is not real to Tea Partiers; what's real to them is the implication in your question that they're racists, and to them *that* is the outrage, and it's an outrage that binds them together. They want desperately to believe in the one-size-fits-all, no-government theology of Rand Paul because it's so easy to understand. At times, their desire to withdraw from the brutally complex global economic system that is an irrevocable fact of our modern life and get back to a simpler world that no longer exists is so intense, it breaks your heart.

At a restaurant in Lexington, I sit down with a Tea Party activist named Frank Harris, with the aim of asking him what he thinks of Wall Street reform. Harris is a bit of an unusual Tea Partier; he's a pro-hemp, anti-war activist who supported Dennis Kucinich. Though he admits he doesn't know very much about the causes of the crash, he insists that financial reform isn't necessary because people like him can always choose not to use banks, take out mortgages, have pensions or even

over their cash-stuffed mattresses with their kerosene lanterns, peering through the blinds at the oncoming hordes of suburban soccer moms they've mistaken for death-panel bureaucrats bent on exterminating anyone who isn't an illegal alien or a Kenyan anti-colonialist.

The world is changing all around the Tea Party. The country is becoming more black and more Hispanic by the day. The economy is becoming more and more complex, access to capital for ordinary individuals more and more remote, the ability to live simply and own a business without worrying about Chinese labor or the depreciating dollar vanished more or less for good. They want to pick up their ball and go home, but they can't; thus, the difficulties and the rancor with those of us who are resigned to life on this planet.

Of course, the fact that we're even sitting here two years after Bush talking about a GOP comeback is a profound testament to two things: One, the American voter's unmatched ability to forget what happened to him 10 seconds ago,

## TEA PARTIERS AREN'T RACIST.

They're just earth-shatteringly stupid, willing to believe the fantasy that white people are some sort of oppressed minority.

event. The old man is dressed in a baseball cap and shirtsleeves. Personalitywise, he's what you might call a pistol; one of the first things he says to me is that people are always telling him to keep his mouth shut, but he just can't. I ask him what he thinks about Paul's position on the Civil Rights Act.

"Well, hell, if it's your restaurant, you're putting up the money, you should be able to do what you want," says Rogers. "I tell you, every time he says something like that, in Kentucky he goes up 20 points in the polls. With Kentucky voters, it's not a problem."

In Lexington, I pose the same question to Mica Sims, a local Tea Party organizer. "You as a private-property owner have the right to refuse service for whatever reason you feel will better your business," she says, comparing the Civil Rights Act to onerous anti-smoking laws. "If you're for small government, you're for small government."

You look into the eyes of these people when you talk to them and they genuinely don't see what the problem is. It's no use explaining that while nobody likes the idea of having to get the government to tell restaurant owners how to act, the Civil Rights Act of 1964 was the tool Americans were forced to use to end a monstrous system of apartheid that for 100 years was the shame

consume everyday products like gas and oil, whose prices are set by the market.

"Really?" I ask. "You can choose not to use gas and oil?" My awesomely fattening cheese-and-turkey dish called a "Hot Brown" is beginning to congeal.

"You can if you want to," Harris says. "And you don't have to take out loans. You can save money and pay for things in cash."

"So instead of regulating banks," I ask, "your solution is saving money in cash?"

He shrugs. "I'm trying to avoid banks at every turn."

My head is starting to hurt. Arguments with Tea Partiers always end up like football games in the year 1900 – everything on the ground, one yard at a time.

My problem, Frank explains, is that I think I can prevent crime by making things illegal. "You want a policeman standing over here so someone doesn't come in here and mug you?" he says. "Because you're going to have to pay for that policeman!"

"But," I say, confused, "we *do* pay for police."

"You're trying to make every situation 100 percent safe!" he shouts.

This, then, is the future of the Republican Party: Angry white voters hovering

and two, the Republican Party's incredible recuperative skill and bureaucratic ingenuity. This is a party that in 2008 was not just beaten but obliterated, with nearly every one of its recognizable leaders reduced to historical-footnote status and pinned with blame for some ghastly political catastrophe. There were literally no healthy bodies left on the bench, but the Republicans managed to get back in the game anyway by plucking an assortment of nativist freaks, village idiots and Internet Hitlers out of thin air and training them into a giant ball of incoherent resentment just in time for the 2010 midterms. They returned to prominence by outdoing Barack Obama at his own game: turning out masses of energized and disciplined supporters on the streets and overwhelming the ballot box with sheer enthusiasm.

The bad news is that the Tea Party's political outrage is being appropriated, with thanks, by the Goldmans and the BPs of the world. The good news, if you want to look at it that way, is that those interests mostly have us by the balls anyway, no matter who wins on Election Day. That's the reality; the rest of this is just noise. It's just that it's a lot of noise, and there's no telling when it's ever going to end. 



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**HOT LIST**

*Say hi to superhottie Rosie Huntington-Whiteley, who's replacing Megan Fox in the next 'Transformers' – and to all the stuff that's way better than the crap you thought you liked last year*







## HOT SUPERFREAK

# NICKI MINAJ

*Lil Wayne's protégée rocks mics, wigs, the rap world*

**I**F YOU'RE GOING TO BLOW AWAY KANYE WEST, RICK ROSS AND JAY-Z ON THE SAME song, you'd better bring your big guns. That's exactly what Nicki Minaj did on Kanye's "Monster" this fall, delivering a breathlessly careening, 32-bar verse about brain-eating and moneymaking. "I pictured a little movie," she recalls. "What would this monster sound like? What if she transforms into a kid, then the Bride of Chucky, then a rapper from New York and then someone with Tourette's?" Minaj's schizoid gifts (on display on her debut LP, *Pink Friday*, out next month) have propelled the Queens native, 25, to the top of the hip-hop heap. After making her mixtape bow as a no-nonsense tough, she came under Lil Wayne's warped tutelage and uncorked her inner drama brat (she studied theater in high school), feigning accents, switching personae, upping the thrills. Asked about her status as a sex symbol, she balks: "I don't want to symbolize sex. I don't want to be sexy to boys. But if it's sexy to the girls, it's cute."

JONAH WEINER





HOT BAND

Ted Dwane,  
Mumford,  
Lovett and  
Marshall  
(from left)

# MUMFORD AND SONS

*Driven by the hit "Little Lion Man," the British folk revivalists crack the Top 20*

**I**N THEIR WAISTCOATS, PROSPECTOR'S boots and stiff, unfaded Wranglers, Mumford and Sons look like a gang of porch singers straight out of 19th-century-era Appalachia. But these twentysomething Brits were terrified of sticking out when they played Tennessee's Bonnaroo festival this year. "If I play my banjo badly in Britain, I can get away with it," says "Country" Winston Marshall, who started teaching himself to play at age 11. "In America, everybody knows if you're crap."

They shouldn't have worried about their stateside reception: Their debut album, *Sigh No More*, full of foot-stomping tunes and Steinbeckian lyrics that wrestle with faith, broke *Billboard*'s Top 20, and they played their Hot 100-cracking single, "Little Lion Man," on *Letterman*.

The foursome got together five years ago at a London-pub country night, bonding over a bluegrass version of Gnarl Barkley's "Crazy." Mumford and Sons (the name was meant to evoke an old family business) initially formed to record frontman Marcus Mumford's songs but quickly morphed into something more democratic. "We're like brothers," says keyboardist Ben Lovett, "and we try to run the band that way."

COURTNEY RUBIN

## HOT GUEST LIST

## Visiting Weezy

Move over, Boom Boom Room – the most exclusive guest list in New York right now is at Rikers Island, where pop royalty have been lining up to visit Lil Wayne since he went in back in March. That is, if they don't get bumped: "Sometimes he has so many guests he tells me to come back another day," his manager, Cortez Bryant, says. Drake, Diddy, Kanye West and Nicki Minaj are among those who've gotten past the guards. During West's visit, he gave Wayne a private concert. "I rapped my entire new album for him," West says. "Like, 'Do you want to rewind?'"



Drake



Kanye

## HOT AGING GRACEFULLY

## PAUL SIMON



Remember how awesome it was to realize that Dylan was back – and possibly better than ever? At 69, Paul Simon is

poised for a *Time Out of Mind*-style return with his new disc, which he previewed at RS HQ recently. Simon described it as his "best since *Graceland*," and we totally agree. We bet his new legion of hipster acolytes (Vampire Weekend, Grizzly Bear) will too.

## HOT CONNECTOR

## SOLANGE

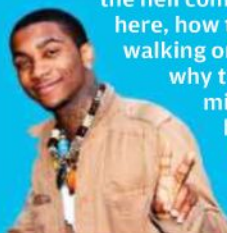
Time was, we knew this about Beyoncé's sis: She was a former Destiny's Child backing dancer who'd released a conventional R&B LP. But then she re-emerged with a sultry Dirty Projectors cover, put Jay-Z on to Grizzly Bear and duetted with Of Montreal – whose Kevin Barnes is a producer on her next record, steeped in the sounds of Jam and Lewis, and Chaka Khan. "I'm not trying to be cool," she says. "I just needed to make the album I wanted to make."



## HOT WEIRDO RAPPER

## LIL B

This blog-beloved Berkeley MC debuted in the Pack, then became a cult hero thanks to his 100-plus MySpace pages, daffy punch lines and mind-blown positivity: "I'm amazed to be on earth right now. It's so weird that I'm breathing. I don't know why the hell computers are here, how the hell I'm walking on the floor, why they made millions of houses, who's doing this. You feel me?"





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## HOT BROADWAY HERO

## REEVE CARNEY

The star of the biggest musical production of all time - Bono and the Edge's \$50 million-plus spectacle *Spider-Man: Turn Off the Dark*, opening in previews November 14th - isn't exactly a Broadway vet. Born to hippie parents and raised in New York's West Village, Reeve Carney, 27, was discovered by *Spider-Man* director Julie Taymor when she caught a club gig by the singer's psych-rock band, also named Carney. "He has incredible natural charisma and a powerful rock voice," Taymor says. "And he feels like a high school student - he's got that youth in him." Carney's psyched for the role: "My whole life has been focused on music. Somehow it's led to this." AUSTIN SCAGGS



HOT WITCH CHRISTINE O'DONNELL &gt;&gt;&gt; HOT PUBLIC ENEMY RANDY QUAID &gt;&gt;&gt; HOT RAPPER'S RAPPER RICK ROSS &gt;&gt;&gt;



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Die Antwoord's  
Ninja and  
Yo-landi Visser

Photograph by THEO WENNER



## HOT BREAKTHROUGH

# DIE ANTWOORD

**M**EET THE YEAR'S WEIRDEST breakthrough: Ninja and Yo-landi Visser, the surreal South African hip-hop duo Die Antwoord, who play high-energy party rap in a style they call "zef." "Zef means you don't fuckin' care what anyone thinks," Ninja says in his thick Afrikaans accent. "Zef means you're in a fuckin' zone."

Die Antwoord – Afrikaans for "the answer" – have been in the zone since early this year, when they emerged online with a pair of creepy, cartoonish music videos ("Zef Side," "Enter the Ninja") that soon amassed millions of views on YouTube. The duo were quickly slotted into last spring's Coachella, *Fight Club* director David Fincher tried to persuade Yo-landi to play the lead in *The Girl With the Dragon Tattoo* (she declined), Interscope signed them and M.I.A. booked them to open for her. "Now it's techno rave moshes every fuckin' time we hit," says Ninja, his eyes the size of dinner plates. "People are rushing off their faces – mental."

**"IT'S TECHNO MOSHES EVERY TIME WE HIT," SAYS NINJA. "PEOPLE RUSHING OFF THEIR FACES."**

Die Antwoord, who release their debut album, *\$O.\$.*, this month, had been working together for years on other musical projects, including the "corporate hip-hop" act MaxNormal .tv. (They also have a daughter together named Sixteen.) The idea for Die Antwoord came after they threw an off-the-chain rave to celebrate Yo-landi's birthday five years ago. They started writing a movie about the party, and the line between reality and performance got blurry. As Ninja wrote the story, he discovered a new and improved version of himself: "And I'm like, 'I love this guy. I want to be this guy.' It's a weird thing to say, 'Throw yourself away and transform,' but it was there: It was a fuckin' ninja, sitting in the dark since I was a little boy and just waiting."

JENNY ELISCU

## HOT COUPLE

# Best Coast and Wavves

"People think it's a shtick, but the couple that blazes together stays together," says Best Coast singer Bethany Cosentino – referring to her buzzy, 420-friendly relationship with Wavves leader Nathan Williams. The pair, both 24, bonded over a shared love of the Beatles, the Wu-Tang Clan, California – and cats. "The first time we slept in the same bed, it was filled with cat hair," says Cosentino. "Our current bed is too, so we've gone full circle."

MATT DIEHL



Cosentino and Williams

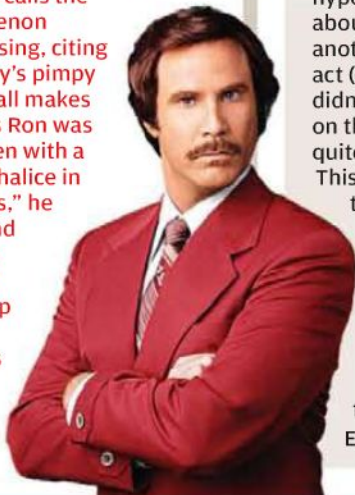
## HOT INFLUENCE

# RON BURGUNDY

Kanye West idolizes him. Drake and Clipse quote him. K-Os named an entire mixtape in his honor. He's Ron Burgundy, the TV newsdude immortalized by Will Ferrell in *Anchorman*, and hip-hop's unlikely muse du jour. Whereas the gangsta generation worshipped Scarface, Burgundy – natty, arrogant and lovably buffoonish – speaks to rap's self-deprecating, irony-steeped new wave. "I base my whole life off *Anchorman*," West says. (There are also Burgundy-edition Nikes, accented in Seventies plaid.)

Ferrell calls the phenomenon unsurprising, citing Burgundy's pimpvibe. "It all makes sense, as Ron was often seen with a golden chalice in his hands," he says. "And he is not afraid to bitch-slap anyone who gets in his way."

JONAH WEINER



## HOT ANTICIPATION

# Daft Punk's 'Tron: Legacy' Soundtrack

When it was announced that French electro maestros Daft Punk were helping the new *Tron* soundtrack, fans didn't just hyperventilate – they posted fake Daft Punk-like songs and passed them off as the real thing. Which other fans hyperventilated about. Is there another musical act (one that didn't get its start on the Disney Channel, that is) that inspires quite the same devoted frenzy as Daft Punk? This has something to do with the fact that they've never made a not-great LP, but it also relates to how, for all their futuristic cyborg-shtick, they serve up an old-fashioned combo of mystery and scarcity. From the robot masks to the way they fall off the radar, only to drop some unexpected new awesome-bomb on us, they're second only to Sade in the way they've sidestepped overexposure. Everything they do is an event.

J.W.





deadmau5  
onstage at the  
2009 Ultra  
Music Festival  
in Miami



people and turned into dance music's crossover star of the moment, collaborating with Travie McCoy, Jason Derulo and Robyn at the VMAs last month and appearing as himself in *DJ Hero 2*. "With Lady Gaga and David Guetta, dance music is definitely having its mainstream moment," says Zimmerman, who is slender and has a tattoo of a Space Invader on his neck (he was born the same month in 1981 that the game was released). He's not a party guy, though: "When I look into the crowd from the DJ booth, it looks like hell. I'm like, 'What if you feel faint? What if you have to piss?'"

Zimmerman - who says he doesn't use drugs and is 60 days sober from booze - has the acerbic tone and white-blue pallor of the 4chan hacker he used to be ("deadmau5" was his IRC handle). The middle child of a painter and a GM manager, he dropped out of

# DEADMAU5

*Dance music's biggest new crossover star is a cranky former hacker in a giant mouse hat*

**A**N ENORMOUS, AIR-CONDITIONED MOUSE HEAD WASN'T in the original plan for electronic musician Joel Zimmerman, the 29-year-old Canadian who performs as deadmau5 (pronounced "dead mouse"). "A few years ago, I was practicing 3-D modeling on my computer, playing with spheres, and I came up with a mouse-head shape," he says. "I thought it was kind of funny to be the mystery mouse guy, like Daft Punk. You could totally pass those guys in the frickin' Kmart and not know it."

The iconic head - triumphant, surreal and goofy all at once - proved to be the key to Zimmerman's success. Since putting it on in 2007, he's blissed out tens of thousands of MDMA-powered party

high school in Niagara Falls and spent his teens teaching himself graphic design, coding and ProTools. "I considered going to college," he says, "but then I realized that they were going to teach me stuff I had already learned by myself on the Internet." When he noticed that online retailers were doing brisk business selling house music, he tried to make a track on a lark. His first major success - "This Is the Hook," co-written with Steve Duda - is actually a poke in the eye to house music (a voice intones, "This is the hook, it's catchy, you like it"). "House music is so formulaic you could probably write software to turn these things out - just tell the computer to repeat the hook over eight bars, take it out, break it down, filter it, then leave dead space for the DJ to mix," says Zimmerman. "But then the song charted on Beatport. I was shocked."

During his shows, Zimmerman works hard, keeping track of his gear through video glasses trained on his self-designed touchscreen computer. "I hate being seen as a DJ, because I'm not a guy up there playing two CDs," he says. "I take on 9 million problems to play live." He smiles. "To entertain other people, I have to entertain myself first."

VANESSA GRIGORIADIS

## HOT DOWNSIZING

### NANO-SCENES

Cheap audio software and the Web have led to minigenres so insular they make "glo-fi" seem like teen pop. Here are four scenes where the people making the music almost outnumber those listening to it.

### DRAG

**SOUND:** Inspired by Houston's late DJ Screw - famous for his slo-mo remixes and cough-syrup-induced death - indie laptop kids set gloomy 1980s synths to Dirty South beats.

**KEY ARTISTS:** The Midwest's SALEM, San Francisco's oOoO



### AQUACRUNK

**SOUND:** Glaswegian hip-hop stocked with techno flourishes, glitchy beats and mixed-in distorted rapping. (The name is a joke that someone put on a flier, but it stuck.)

**KEY ARTISTS:** The producer who basically started it, Rustie, and Hudson Mohawke, both signed to power-house electronic label Warp

### SKWEE

**SOUND:** Spare Scandinavian electro featuring high-pitched analog synths. Devotees dig puns ("skweeed," "skweelicious," etc.).

**KEY ARTISTS:** Helsinki's Eero Johannes, Rotterdam's Randy Barracuda



### MOOMBAHTON

**SOUND:** Slow down Dutch house tracks, and they bear an uncanny resemblance to the Puerto Rican rap genre reggaeton. Sprinkle in chopped Español vocals and percussion and - voilá - Moombahton!

**KEY ARTISTS:** D.C. DJ Dave Nada and a bunch of random people on Soundcloud.com



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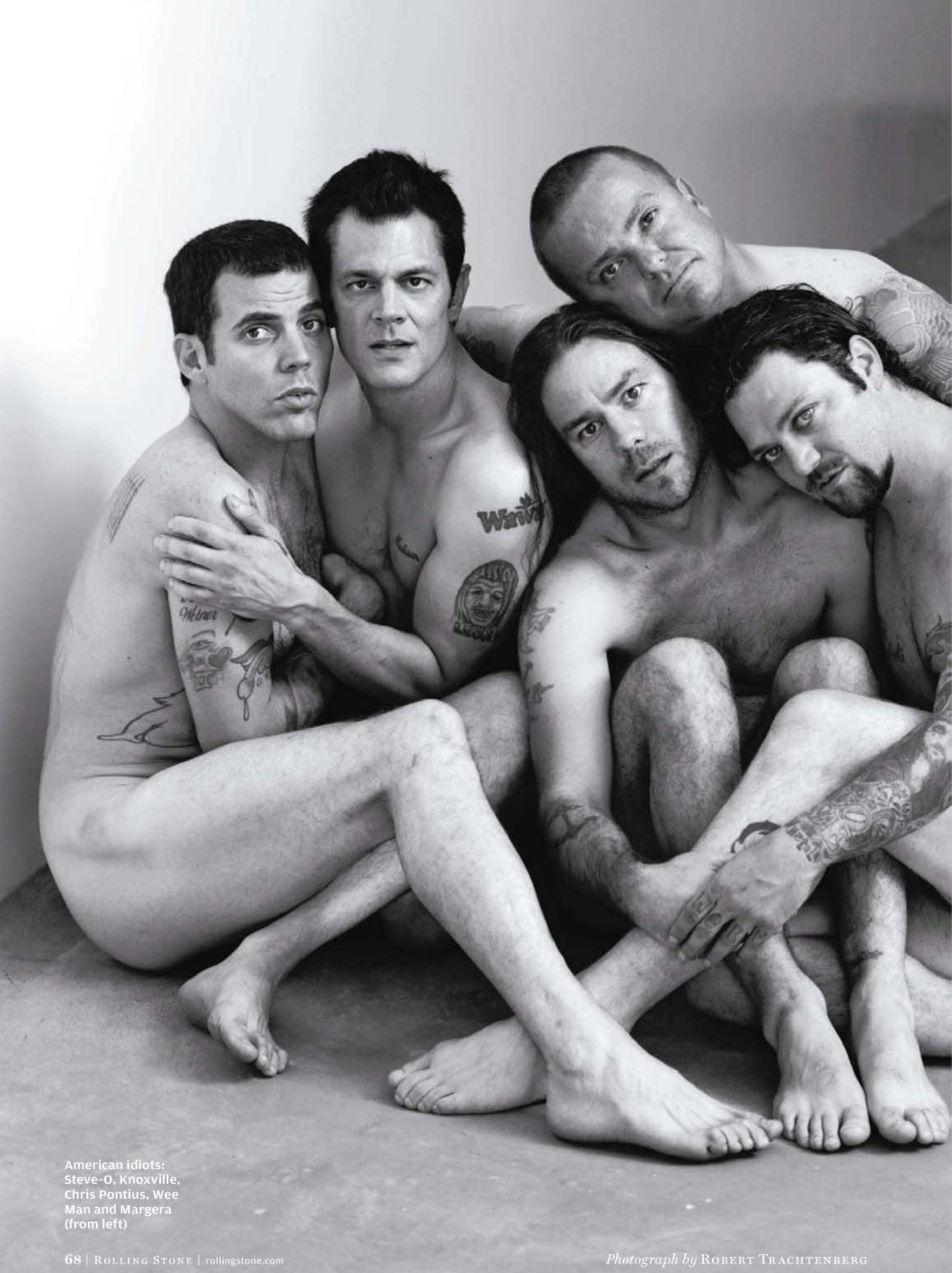
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American idiots:  
Steve-O, Knoxville,  
Chris Pontius, Wee  
Man and Margera  
(from left)



HOT SEQUEL

# JACKASS 3D

*The gross-out kings celebrate 10 years of madness with their biggest movie yet*

**W**HEN JAMES CAMERON REVOLUTIONIZED FILMMAKING WITH HIS three-dimensional opus, transporting viewers to a world called Pandora with mind-blowing visuals and breathtaking detail, he left one key question unanswered: What would a nut sack look like in 3-D? ★ "It's pretty much the exact opposite of *Avatar*," says Bam Margera of *Jackass 3D*, out October 15th. "Instead of CGI, you're gonna see things like Wienercam, which is my dick peeing on people's faces in 3-D." Try getting a Na'vi to do *that*. ★ The guys always knew they wanted to shoot another movie to celebrate their 10th anniversary. But when the studio proposed doing it in 3-D, "I wasn't so hot on the idea," says Johnny Knoxville. They'd always shot on the fly, with hand-held cameras and tiny crews. But once they saw test footage, they were all in, even using a camera called the Phantom, capable of shooting an astonishing 1,000 frames per second, for an opening sequence that's destined to become the *Manhattan* Gershwin montage of getting punched in the junk. ★ Off-screen, some of the guys had been having a rough few years. Knoxville took a long hiatus from feature films after critical flops like *The Dukes of Hazzard* and *The Ringer*. ("I think he was tired of taking roles that weren't for him," says director and producer Jeff Tremaine.) Margera, meanwhile – whose 2007 wedding was chronicled on MTV's *Bam's Unholy Union* – experienced trouble on the home front. "We're still best friends," he says. "It was just a matter of her wanting me to grow up and stop drinking, and me saying, 'I get paid a lot of money *not* to grow up, and drinking helps me do that.'" (Their current status, he adds, "is difficult.") ★ But no Jackass had a tougher time than Steve-O. He'd struggled with drug abuse for years – acid, booze, coke. In March 2008, alarmed by some suicidal-sounding e-mails Steve-O had sent, Knoxville and friends had him invol- [Cont. on 70]



[Cont. from 69] untarilly committed. ("You know you've got a drug problem when Johnny Knoxville does your intervention," Steve-O says.) He spent the next six months in treatment centers and psych wards, then another year and a half in a halfway house, "scrubbing toilets and shit." Now he's a sober, nonsmoking vegan who volunteers at a nursing home twice weekly. "If I could quit jacking off to Internet porn," he says, "I'd be a candidate for sainthood."

At first, Steve-O worried being sober might hurt his work. But in the end, says Tremaine, "he proved you don't need drugs and alcohol to be an idiot."

And idiotic it is. *Jackass 3D* has all the masochistic retardedness fans have come to expect: Electric Avenue, an obstacle course through 40 dangling stun guns; *The Rocky*, in which a victim is splashed with water and then punched, à la sweaty slo-mo Stallone; *Invisible Man*, where Knoxville camouflages himself to match the walls of a bullring and tries not to get gored. (His verdict? "Bulls are smart, man.")

**"I'D LOVE TO MAKE A LIVING," SAYS STEVE-O, "WITHOUT SHOVING THINGS UP MY BUTT."**

The injury report says it all: dislocated shoulder, ripped-open hand (Knoxville); broken nose, massive burns, BB lodged in nipple (Steve-O); broken ribs, foot and clavicle (Margerita).

There's also no shortage of what Tremaine calls "the usual poo-poo pee-pee throw-up." One bit written especially for 3-D has Steve-O vomiting into the audience. But for Margera's money the grossest stunt is either the Poo Cocktail Supreme – in which Steve-O is strapped inside a shit-filled Porta-Potty and slingshotted into the air ("I could actually feel piss and shit particles landing on me," Margera says) – and the Poo-cano, in which Dave England paints his ass like a mountain, then downs a liberal dose of Ex-Lax.

After a decade-plus of abuse, some of the Jackasses admit to possibly looking for an exit strategy. "I'd love to make a living at being silly without having to shove shit up my butt," says Steve-O. But they also know they're providing a valuable service. "The first time a cave man farted in a cave, everybody laughed," Steve-O says. "In a weird way, there's something noble about making sacrifices and being self-deprecating for other people's amusement. We're just trying to make the world a sillier place."

JOSH EELLS

Jesse Eisenberg as Facebook founder Mark Zuckerberg



**HOT MOVIE**

# THE SOCIAL NETWORK

*How David Fincher and Aaron Sorkin turned the founding of Facebook into an era-defining masterpiece*

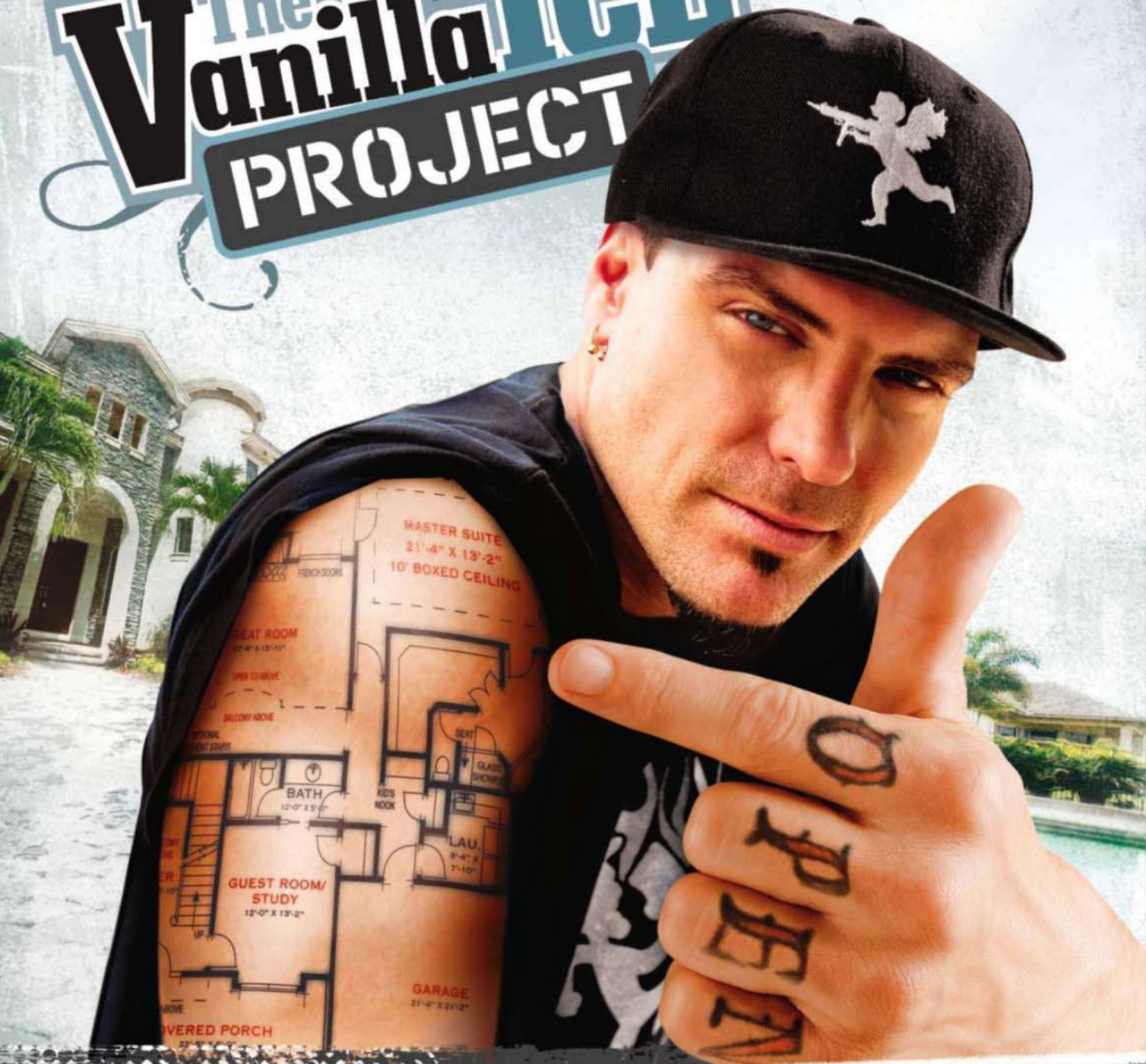
**F**ACEBOOK FOUNDER AND CEO MARK Zuckerberg is discovering a little-known danger of being a public figure with an enigmatic personality: One of the best movies of the decade might just come along and fill in the blanks, whether you like it or not. *The Social Network*, written by Aaron Sorkin and directed by David Fincher, tells the tale of Zuckerberg's ruthless battle to keep control of the billion-dollar business he started in his Harvard dorm. Based in part on depositions in lawsuits filed against Zuckerberg and Facebook, the film draws much of its dark humor from a central irony: The awkward guy who changed our definition of "friend" never seemed to grasp the word's original meaning.

For Jesse Eisenberg, who plays Zuckerberg, getting the awkward part down wasn't hard. That much is evident as he strolls into a Chicago lounge, plops down next to Sorkin and begins stammering and wringing his hands. Eisenberg's hipster-dork striped polo shirt and wet-dog curly hair are an amusing contrast to *The West Wing* creator Sorkin's crisp WASPiness: wind-swept sandy hair, tortoiseshell glasses, checked blazer, striped button-down, tan pants, tan skin.

Eisenberg was hardly playing himself, however. "Jesse is an entirely compassionate entity," says Fincher later that afternoon, calling from Sweden, where he's shooting next year's *The Girl With the Dragon Tattoo* adaptation. "He goes out of his way to make sure other people are comfortable. That was the thing I decided had to get nowhere near his onscreen presence as Mark. . . . I would say, 'That was great, but I want you to be a little more opaque. I don't want to be able to fathom what's going on in your head.'" [Cont. on 72]



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HOT ACTRESS

## ROONEY MARA

"I would have to be insane to have not wanted the role," says Rooney Mara, 25, who beat out far bigger names to play tortured Lisbeth Salander in *The Girl With the Dragon Tattoo*. "Salander is one of the most complex, enigmatic female characters I have ever read." Mara hasn't had time to ponder how her life might change: "An hour after I was hired, I was in motorcycle training. Five days later, I was in Sweden." Her small, indelible role in *Dragon* director David Fincher's *The Social Network* led directly to the new part. "People go, 'Lisbeth has to kick ass,'" says Fincher, "but my idea is that she's smart and just different."

BRIAN HIATT

Hot Defect:  
Masculinity

These have to be the weirdest days for red-blooded American masculinity since Rollie Fingers started curling his mustache. Take *Jersey Shore*, where the guidos are constantly checking out one another's makeup, obsessed with their hair gel and GTL rituals - like how when the Situation is getting ready to go out, he puts on "the shirt before the shirt." When Ronnie sees Sammi, he gushes, "She has the nicest legs I've ever seen... on a woman, bro." (Sorry, Sammi - guess you're no Derek Jeter.)



All over, it's the *Twilight* of the Bro-Gods. On *Mad Men*, we see Don Draper in the process of creating all the postwar mythology of American masculinity, and we see what a crock it is. Reality TV has given us a new take-charge hero, the hyperfunctional gay guy who gets it done while all the straight dudes are breaking down. See the last season of *Top Chef*, with a kitchen of hilariously whiny and weepy straight guys. Or witness Gen. McChrystal, whose love of Bud Light Lime couldn't beef up his image as anything more than the wrong guy to run the wrong war.

ROB SHEFFIELD

[Cont. from 70] For all the skepticism that initially greeted the idea of a Facebook movie, critics are receiving *The Social Network* with something close to ecstasy: It already looks like a front-runner for Best Picture, as well as one of those rare movies that sums up the spirit of a generation and an era. If Fincher's 1999 film *Fight Club* suggested physical violence as an antidote to the emotional nullity of modern life, *The Social Network* sets up the opposite scenario: Socially excluded geeks somehow convince everyone, even cute girls, to follow them into a virtual world. The gloomiest interpretation of the film's message is that by creating a

world in his own image, Zuckerberg only succeeded in spreading the contagion of isolation and loneliness to 500 million or so "friends."

For his part, Fincher claims to have modest expectations. "Let's hope it's not just *Revenge of the Nerds*," he says with a laugh. The idea was to elevate what could have been a trashy Eighties teen movie. "There is an element of that in the movie, at its most digestible and streamlined," says Fincher. "But people forget that at the core of [Terrence Malick's] *Days of Heaven* is a James M. Cain-type of pulpy story, and at the core of *2001* is a pulpy science-fiction marrow."

Appropriately enough, *The Social Network* begins by giving its audience a couple of good, hard pokes - which, in turn, show what Sorkin and Fincher each brought to the project. The very first scene is nine pages of quintessentially Sorkin dialogue, with Eisenberg and the intense young actress Rooney Mara (as Zuckerberg's fed-up girlfriend, Erica) talking past each other in a noisy bar until Erica brutally dumps him. Zuckerberg never saw it coming - the movie presents him as, in Fincher's words, "Asperger-y or whatever" - unable to read social cues. "Here's a technology that allows people to connect with the world," says Fincher, "and it was de- [Cont. on 74]

HOT PERFECT CASTING SACHA BARON COHEN AS FREDDIE MERCURY &gt;&gt;&gt; HOT ROBERTO BENIGNI SOFIA VERGARA &gt;&gt;&gt;



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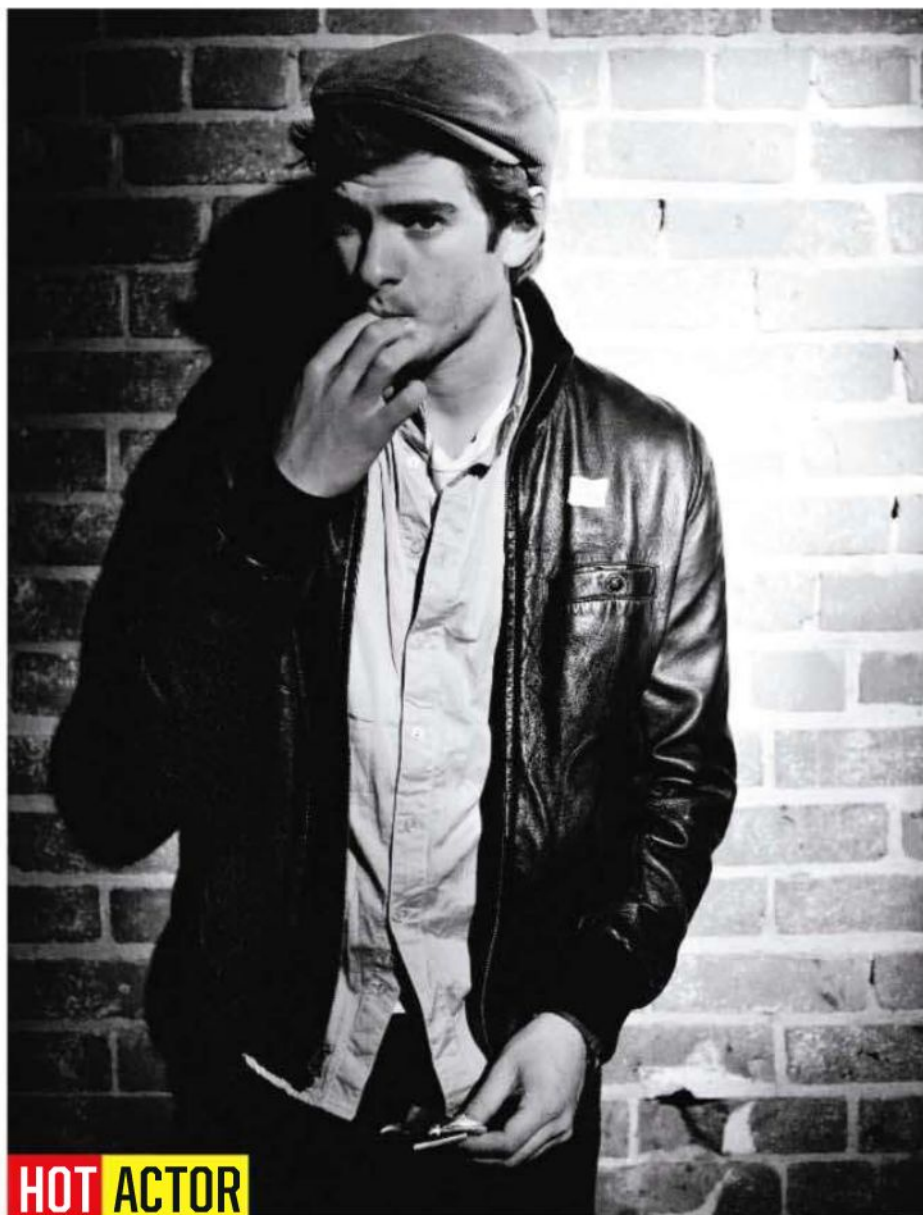
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HOT ACTOR

# ANDREW GARFIELD

*From Facebook to comic book:  
Meet the new Spider-Man*

**A**NDREW GARFIELD, THE NEXT BIG-screen Spider-Man, grew up in Surrey, England, with his own secret identity, or at least a conflicted one. His dad was American, his mom British; he wasn't sure what he was. "We all feel like outsiders sometimes," says Garfield. "I definitely have felt that way all my life." But probably not at the moment: In addition to the Spidey casting, announced in July, the 27-year-old's role in *The Social Network*, as Facebook founder Mark Zuckerberg's discarded business partner Eduardo Saverin, is his highest-profile performance yet. The chameleonic actor also starred

as a doomed teen in September's pastoral sci-fi film *Never Let Me Go*. "I've got a lot to be happy about, and part of me doesn't feel like I deserve it," he admits. "So part of me wants to sabotage it." *Spider-Man* director Marc Webb (*[500] Days of Summer*) said he chose Garfield for his "intelligence, wit and humanity," but there was also an intensively physical screen test. "They want to see you move and whether you'd look good in lycra," says Garfield, once a nationally ranked child gymnast. "I treated it like an extension of my childhood, when I would climb over couches and pretend I was Spider-Man." With filming set for the end of the year, he's ready to hit the gym. He's not sure how much muscle he's supposed to add, but he is positive about one thing: "I can't be fat," he says. **BRIAN HIATT**

[Cont. from 72] vised by a guy who for all his genius can't go on *60 Minutes* and keep a straight face."

Fincher shot the film digitally, allowing endless takes without needing to stop and reload the camera – and he made the actors perform the opening scene 99 times. "That was good," he would tell them, "now shave two minutes off it."

In the next scene, a freshly dumped Zuckerberg leaves the noisy bar and heads out into the wintry quiet of the Harvard campus. Trent Reznor and Atticus Ross' hazy nightmare of a score kicks in – lonely piano notes underpinned by buzzing electronic static – and the movie's tone is set. "I think that's the biggest signal that this isn't the movie you thought it was going to be," says Sorkin. When Reznor first saw a rough cut of the sequence, he remembers jangly guitar rock playing at that moment. "I thought, let me see if I

**SAYS FINCHER, "I HOPE IT'S NOT JUST 'REVENGE OF THE NERDS.' THERE'S AN ELEMENT OF THAT."**

can push the envelope a little and play up those emotions going on under the thing, pull up the darkness a bit," he says. "When I saw it again with [my] music, I got goose bumps."

Zuckerberg begins a night of drunken, angry hacking, inventing a Facebook precursor called Facemash – and Fincher shoots the sequence with the tight, ominous rhythms of a thriller or horror movie, cutting between Zuckerberg and his nerdy roommates and the elite, decadent parties elsewhere on campus. "That is Fincher being Fincher at his best," says Sorkin.

The movie rockets off from there, tracing a deeply researched story built largely around two lawsuits: one by Zuckerberg's best (and possibly only) friend, Facebook co-founder Eduardo Saverin, who was eventually shut out of the company; the other by Cameron and Tyler Winklevoss, two patrician jocks who had enlisted Zuckerberg to program a Harvard dating site that they believed inspired Facebook.

Both cases were settled out of court, but the depositions provide a natural framing device for the movie, which was inspired by the proposal for Ben Mezrich's then-in-progress Facebook book, *The Accidental Billionaires*. The device also allows the filmmakers enough wiggle room to claim they're only presenting possible versions of the truth: "That's not what [Cont. on 76]"

HOT "NO, SERIOUSLY" CHRISTINA AGUILERA RELEASED AN ALBUM THIS YEAR >>> HOT WILLIE MAYS DEREK JETER >>>



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## HOT DOCUMENTARIES

## Stranger Than Fiction

*Documentaries outclass and outshock Hollywood by pressing the hottest buttons*



## CATFISH

The dangers of social networking are exposed by Ariel Schulman and Henry Joost as they track Ariel's photographer brother, Nev, in his attempt to find a Michigan girl he friended on Facebook. What they find is something that will stand your hair on end. You can't make this stuff up.



## WAITING FOR "SUPERMAN"

Have you ever thought that public education is heading for the sinkhole? Well, Davis Guggenheim (*An Inconvenient Truth*) will convince you of it with a horror show of stats written on the faces of kids who fall through the cracks. Get this: Tenure is part of the problem.



## CLIENT 9

Alex Gibney, who took on the torture of a political prisoner in U.S. custody in the Oscar-winning *Taxi to the Dark Side*, now moves into the dark heart of a political sex scandal. Gibney argues that a hooker didn't orchestrate the downfall of New York's ex-governor Eliot Spitzer, it was a hit from Wall Street.



## INSIDE JOB

Who is really to blame for the global financial meltdown? Charles Ferguson, who asked the blame question about the Iraq War in *No End in Sight*, engages in some illuminating target practice. It's chilling to learn how many for-a-fee academics sold out to sell us myths about lending and deregulation.



## TABLOID

Errol Morris turns his hypnotic gaze on tabloid culture through Joyce McKinney, the former beauty queen accused of kidnapping and sexually abusing a Mormon missionary in 1977. McKinney claims you can't rape a man: "That's like putting a marshmallow in a parking meter."

PETER TRAVERS

[Cont. from 74] happened," the Zuckerberg character says in his own deposition early on, trying to negate the entire opening scene.

The actors and filmmakers insist that, if anything, Zuckerberg is the hero, or at least the antihero, of the story. Producer Scott Rudin says he thought of hiring Fincher because his attitude reminded him of Zuckerberg: "David is a 'fuck off' guy, a brilliant guy, and also someone who wants things the way he wants them." Adds Fincher, "Simpletons have written, 'Oh, Zuckerberg's so mean.' But other people say he's amazing and complex and tortured."

Justin Timberlake has the film's flashiest performance, as the charismatic serial entrepreneur Sean Parker, best known as co-founder of Napster. He seduces Zuckerberg into the world of big business, gliding into clubs and restaurants like a born superstar. "I needed a kid who understood what it is to see two people seated together and know that there was a way to profit from it," says Fincher, who admired Timberlake's *SNL* appearances. "And Justin just had that. I did have the conversation with him: 'Do you have to be live in front of 50 million people to get it up for this?

You're gonna do it 30 times. Are you gonna get bored?'"

Timberlake recalls, "I said to him, 'Listen, man, I'm not the whiny wide receiver dude - I'm the linebacker. You tell me who to hit, I'll hit them 1,000 times.'" Timberlake was so deep into the role that, until he saw the movie in September, he didn't register the irony of hearing pro-Napster rants ("Who knew the record industry didn't have a sense of humor," he says at one point) coming from his lips.

The real Zuckerberg has said he's unlikely to see the movie. But he's claimed that many of its details are inaccurate, particularly disputing the idea that he was anxious to join one of Harvard's exclusive "final clubs." Says Sorkin, "There is nothing that I made up because I thought it would be a cool movie moment."

Fincher is mellow on the subject of the movie's fidelity to truth - or lack thereof. "These characters are all distillations, balsamic reductions," he says. "It's not our intention to drive business away from Face-

book or to fuel the ire of Mark Zuckerberg. I don't know if all of it's true, and I don't know what his culpability is."

But Rudin bristles at a Facebook spokesman's claim that "the movie is fiction." "The real Zuckerberg and his colleagues at Facebook spent many hundreds of millions of dollars to make these two

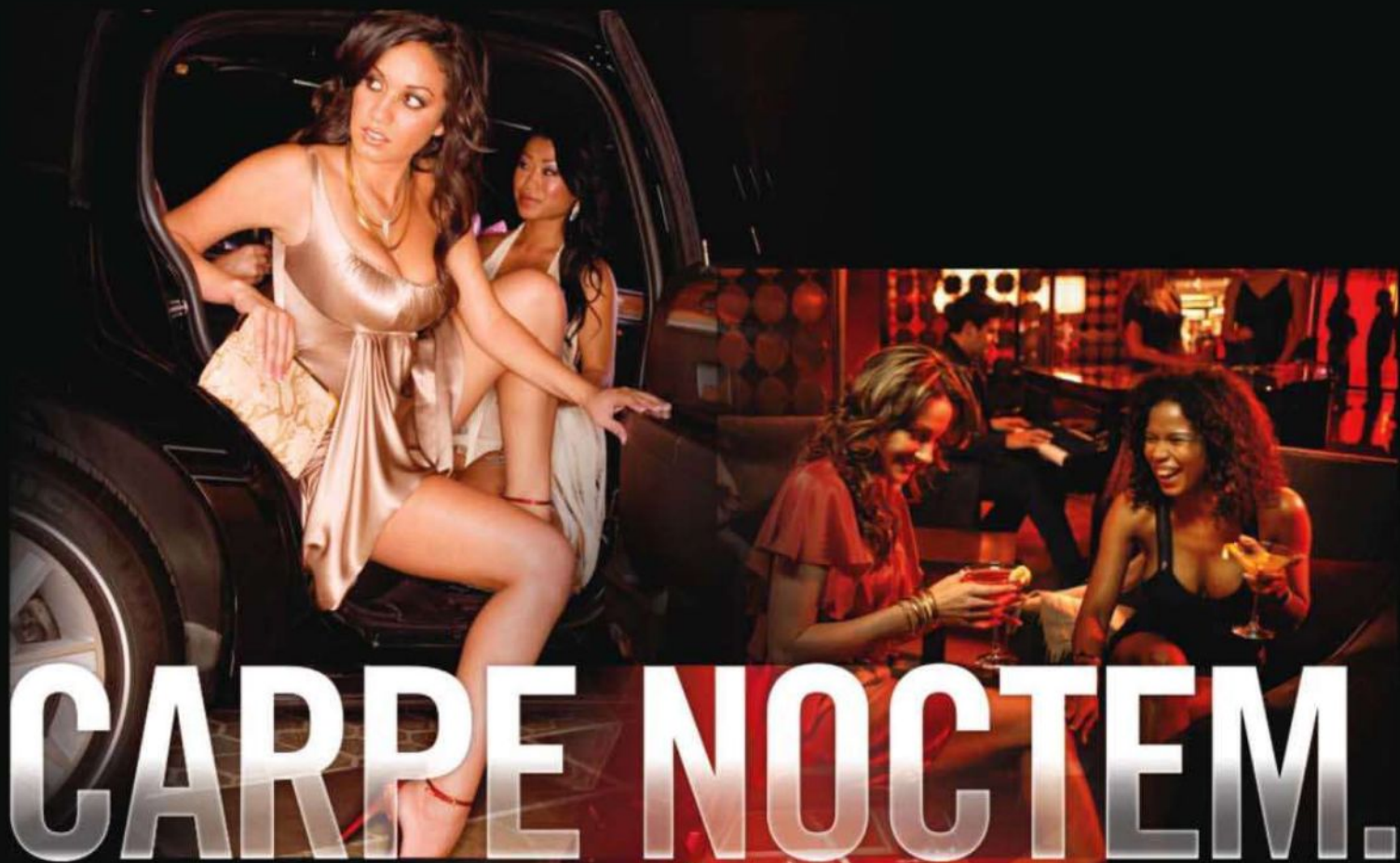
claims go away," says Rudin. "The movie was incredibly sourced, and paints, I think, a very accurate picture of him." (Reports put the payoff to the Winklevosses at roughly \$65 million; Saverin had his credit as a Facebook co-founder restored to the website, and his settlement is reported to be substantially higher.)

And what if the Zuckerberg of the movie is more arrogant, volatile and articulate than the one in real life? What if, in short, he's been Sorkinized? Rudin laughs at the idea. "I think every person on Earth should have the opportunity once to be Sorkinized. What could possibly be better than that? I wouldn't complain about it if it were me."

BRIAN HIATT

**"IT'S NOT OUR INTENTION TO DRIVE BUSINESS AWAY FROM FACEBOOK," SAYS FINCHER.**





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## HOT KID SISTER

## Elle Fanning

In December, Elle Fanning – who debuted in *I Am Sam* at the age of two playing a younger version of her sister Dakota's character – steps into her own spotlight with Sofia Coppola's *Somewhere*. The film stars Stephen Dorff as a burned-out actor and Elle, 12, as his daughter/ticket to redemption, whom the actress plays with quiet melancholy. "Elle's mature but still kidlike," says Coppola. Elle and Dakota are close – they still share a bathroom. "It's awful," Elle says, jokingly. "I cleaned crusty toothpaste out of the sink this morning."



## HOT PITCHES

## WRONG-ERA ROCK MOVIES

*With biopics on the way about Jerry Garcia before the Dead and John Lennon's childhood, Rob Sheffield cooked up a few more ideas for rock flicks that totally don't rock*

## PRIVATE HENDRIX

The zany adventures of Jimi Hendrix in the Army after he enlisted. It's like *Full Metal Jacket* meets *Up In Smoke*.

**AD LINE:** "Scuse this GI while he kisses the sky!"

**PLOT:** Can boot camp turn a voodoo child into a soldier? No Purple Heart for this dude – he's lost in a "Purple Haze."

Especially when Jimi humps his M16 and moans, "Click bang, what a hang, yo' daddy just shot poor me!"

**FRED WILLARD ROLE:**

The Sarge. "Damn it, Hendrix! You threw the pin, but you're still holding the gren – duuuck!"

**TRAILER CLIP:** Uh-oh! Guess who Sarge told to paint the latrine for the Colonel's visit?



## BUFFALO SUPERFREAK

In the 1960s Toronto scene, Neil Young and Rick James were roommates and played together in the Mynah Birds.

**AD LINE:** "Friendship – it's a hell of a drug!"

**PLOT:** Rick invites his kinky girlfriends over for a kinky "jam session." But can they hide their love-in from the Man?

**FRED WILLARD ROLE:** Mr. Soul, the landlord. "Damn it, boys – turn it down! I'm trying to meditate up here!"

**TRAILER CLIP:** Rick responds badly when Neil hangs a chore wheel on the fridge.



## STAPLEGUN WASTELAND

In the Eighties, after years of rockin' out with the Who, Pete Townshend took a desk job as a book editor with London publisher Faber and Faber.

**AD LINE:** "Meet the new boss!"

**PLOT:** It's *Quadrophenia* meets *The Devil Wears Prada*. Can Pete settle down with a blue pencil and his "Not To Be Taken Away" coffee mug?

**FRED WILLARD**

**ROLE:** Tommy, the copy editor who wants to argue over the line "Don't braise your eye." "Damn it, Townshend – there's no hyphen in 'squeezebox!'"

**TRAILER CLIP:** Frustrated by dangling modifiers and split infinitives, Pete rides his motorcycle over a cliff to "Love, Reign O'er Me."



## STRICTLY 4 MY HOMEWORKS

Before Tupac became a famous gangsta rapper, he was just another theater kid doing *The Nutcracker* at the Baltimore School for the Arts. It's like *Thug Life: The "Glee" Years!*

**AD LINE:** "Sometimes it takes a baller to do ballet!"

**PLOT:** Heartbroken when he isn't cast in *Guys and Dolls*, Tupac starts his own musical.

**FRED WILLARD ROLE:**

Mr. Krupke, the gym teacher. "Damn it, Tupac – only God can judge you, but I can flunk you!"

**TRAILER CLIP:** During a tap dance, Pac sings a medley of "Wonda Why They Call U Bitch" and "How Lucky Can You Get" from *Funny Girl*.





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# — HOT COMEDY —

## REGGIE WATTS

**R**EGGIE WATTS IS A COMEDIAN LIKE PLATYPUS: mammals: weirdly and awesomely. A typical set of his includes improvised electronic-music loops, squirrel impressions and a 15-minute autobiographical doo-wop freestyle. The closest he comes to a joke? “A panther walks into a gazebo. Man doesn’t have enough time to say anything, because he’s killed instantly.”

“At some point, I want people to feel confused,” says Watts, 38, splayed across his Manhattan hotel bed. A biracial Montanan with bright-pink fingernails and a giant Afro, he

### HOT STAND-UP

played in rock and jazz bands before getting into comedy. Last spring, Conan O’Brien picked him to open his national tour, and in a few days he’s shooting a Comedy Central pilot for a “trippy variety show.”

Conversations with Watts pingpong around, from biomimicry to the problem of consciousness to the virtues of liquid THC to his friendship with Brian Eno. (“We hang out and talk about concepts.”) Later, in the hotel coffee shop, a cute hipster girl breezes in. “Welcome, welcome, right this way!” Watts says, ushering her, amused, into line. He takes an elaborate bow and twirls. She smiles. “You’re funny,” she says. “You should be a comedian.”

JOSH EELLS

### Hot Crapdaptation: *Rihanna in 'Battleship'*

Every time you think Hollywood has reached the final frontier of ideas that no sentient creature would ever consider throwing money at, they break on through to the other side. Hence, *Rihanna in Battleship*. No joke: The “Umbrella” singer is starring in a \$200 million adaptation of the old board game with Alexander Skarsgård and Liam Neeson. What’s next, Ke\$ha in *\$tratego*? Who cares whether it’s any good – the artistic achievement is in the awfulness of the idea. *Battleship*? Sunk!

ROB SHEFFIELD



### HOT HOT COMICS

## Comedy's (Sexy) Next Generation

*In the post-Samberg-and-Silverman era, these young comics prove hotness doesn't have to be a laugh-killer*



AUBREY PLAZA

She plays the brooding teen maladjust April on *Parks & Recreation* – surly and sultry, she’s like a more babe-ly Daria, and her eye roll is a deadly weapon.



DONALD GLOVER

The *Community* jock and ex-30 *Rock* writer is also a (good!) rapper, *Childish Gambino*. Some comedy comes from insecurity; his comes from swagger.



LIZZY CAPLAN

Ravishing and razor-tongued, this *Party Down* and *Mean Girls* veteran has been picked by Will Ferrell and Adam McKay for a new HBO series they’re developing.



ZACH CREGGER

Cregger looks like a handsome wolf, broke out with IFC comedy troupe the Whitest Kids U’Know – and was cast in the new NBC sitcom *Friends With Benefits*.

HOT SINGLE WHITE FEMALE BLACK SWAN >>> HOT THRIFT-SHOP CLOGGER ‘GUITAR HERO’ >>> HOT KATE BUSH GLASSER





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## HOT JOB OPENING

## THE NEXT 'OFFICE' BOSS

With Michael Scott leaving Dunder Mifflin, we grill "Office" head writer Paul Lieberstein about some top contenders for the



**RICKY GERVAIS** The *Office* co-creator and star of the original British version

**WHY HE'S IN THE RUNNING:** He invented the character, and he's been trying to become an American comedy star for years.

**LIEBERSTEIN:** "He's been saying he's not interested. Also, my biggest problem is that his character, David Brent, is a version of Michael Scott. He might have a cameo, though."

**ODDS:** 100-1

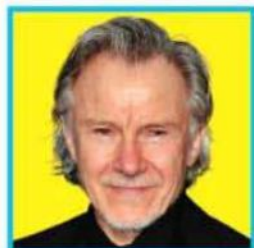


**DANNY MCBRIDE** Boorish star of *Pineapple Express* and *Eastbound & Down*

**WHY HE'S IN THE RUNNING:** He's one of the hottest comic actors in the country, and his sensibility would jibe perfectly.

**LIEBERSTEIN:** "He can say something rude and you're completely on his side at the same moment. Steve Carell does that well too. Danny is very busy, though, so I don't know."

**ODDS:** 50-1



**HARVEY KEITEL** Legendary movie badass (*Pulp Fiction*, *Bad Lieutenant*)

**WHY HE'S IN THE RUNNING:** The writers have openly discussed their love of his work; he'd be a hysterical contrast to Carell.

**LIEBERSTEIN:** "I love him, but it's not appropriate. I'd love to bring him in at the end of the series and have him just decimate the office to the point where we have to fold up the show."

**ODDS:** 25-1



**ED HELMS** Plays the show's emotionally unstable Cornell grad, Andy Bernard

**WHY HE'S IN THE RUNNING:** *The Hangover* transformed him into a movie star who might bolt if he doesn't get more screen time.

**LIEBERSTEIN:** "Ed Helms is breaking like early Carell. He's already a \$5 million movie player, and he's one movie away from being a huge star. I could see us centering a show around him, and making the boss less of a central character."

**ODDS:** 3-1

ANDY GREENE

## Hot Fear: Tiny Scary Things

Bedbugs? Bird mites? This year, the biggest thing in paranoia is the tiniest thing. It's the next logical step after the "If You See Something, Say Something" era: invaders so tiny, you can never prove they're not there! America is full of free-floating dread, after nearly a decade of seeing briefcases as bombs, airports as combat zones and our own shoes as deadly weapons. It makes sense that Americans have finally moved on to terrorists that we can't see at all. That's why people are suddenly going ballistic over bugs hiding in our mattresses and pigeons coughing in our air conditioners. The smaller the enemy, the more scared we get. Hell, look at Justin Bieber, the music equivalent of bedbugs, slipping through all the pop-culture filters designed to keep him away from the rest of us. And Snooki, who snuck right under the "You must be this tall to end Western civilization as we know it" bar. Even the economic crash can be blamed on micro-threats. Chinese currency? How much is a yuan anyway? Like, a dime? That's all it took to sink the dollar? Sleep tight, America. And don't let the bedbugs bite.

ROB SHEFFIELD



## HOT MESSED-UP SITCOM

## 'Childrens Hospital'

Rob Corddry (*The Daily Show*) got the idea for this series at one of the scariest moments in his life. "My wife and I accidentally pulled a ligament in my daughter's arm while we were swinging her," he says. "The children's hospital was full of injured children on these tiny gurneys. There's nothing funny about it, but somehow it occurred to me that it would be the perfect setting for a comedy."

The series began as a webcast and was recently brought to Adult Swim. Corddry plays a doctor clown who refuses to treat patients medically in favor of the "healing power of laughter." Megan Mullally, Ken Marino and Henry Winkler play his incompetent co-workers. Corddry says the veteran Winkler has been up for any joke, but "you can see him thinking, 'What has happened to comedy?'" A.G.



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# HOT STYLE

## FREJA

**D**ANISH MODEL FREJA BEHA Erichsen has been the face of Gucci and Chanel, and has graced the covers of British, French and Italian *Vogue*. But what she really wants to be is Jimmy Page. “I always wanted to be a rock star,” says the five-foot-ten Freja (pronounced FRY-ya). “My mom could have killed me – I would amp up the music and scream as loud as I could.” The willowy 22-year-old’s tastes lean toward the indie-centric: Cat Power, Jeff Buckley, Cold War Kids, “everything Jack White has ever done.” Lately she’s been listening to a lot of Robert Johnson and Muddy Waters, teaching herself to play the blues or jamming in her living room, where she keeps five guitars. “I live on

**HOT MODEL** Wall Street, so you can imagine my neighbors don’t really dig it. But I don’t like all the business guys in suits.”

Freja was discovered on a Copenhagen street at age 17, and since then her princess-with-attitude face, chopstick legs and androgynous style (leather jackets, motorcycle boots) have brought her to the cusp of mainstream fame. (Recently she anchored campaigns for Balenciaga and Valentino, and was picked by Justin Timberlake to introduce his clothing line on the runway.)

Maybe it’s the Zeppelin love, maybe it’s the sneer, but Freja has a reputation as one of fashion’s bad girls. She has 16 tattoos – including a Colt revolver on her left arm and a PJ Harvey lyric on her right wrist – and pierced nipples. She admits her club-chick look can come off as cool and intimidating. “But I don’t think I’m a dark person at all,” she says. “I think I’m quite mellow.” And with that she’s off to plug in her ax and make some noise.

JOSH EELLS



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## HOT TASTEMAKER

# OLIVIER ZAHM

**O**LIVIER ZAHM, THE 47-YEAR-OLD Parisian libertine who edits the avant-garde fashion and art bible *Purple Fashion Magazine*, has a very specific demographic he's trying to reach: "When a young teenager reads *Purple* somewhere in Japan or in Australia, my dream is that they will follow a new path," he says. "An alternative life, an unconventional life."

There aren't many better pitchmen for a lifestyle of radical freedom than Zahm. A former art critic and philosophy student, he is probably best known for his Warholian photo blog, *Purple Diary*, which consists of black-and-white snapshots of Zahm and his gorgeous, famous friends – Chloë Sevigny, Paz de la Huerta, Terry Richardson – behaving badly. "With the blog, I try to push the limit of privacy, what's private and what's public," he says, referring to a recent run of explicit pictures

**"I TRY TO PUSH THE LIMITS OF WHAT'S PRIVATE AND WHAT'S PUBLIC WITH MY BLOG."**

that capture his sex life with a series of impossibly beautiful young women. "I don't know if I will continue, because it's problematic. I lost my girlfriend because of this, in a way."

Zahm's own alternative path was blazed by his hippie parents. "On vacations with friends in the countryside, there was all kinds of experimentation," he says. "Theater, film, free sex." Now he splits his time between Paris, where *Purple's* business operations are located, and New York, which is his favorite city in the world – especially in the summer. "It's so Seventies," he says. "It's beautiful, it's authentic, it's free."

The Seventies are high on Zahm's list of favorite things, which also includes custom boots with oz emblazoned on the soles, Sonic Youth and Serge Gainsbourg. "Men had a really good time in the Seventies," he says. "Really organic, easy, bisexual, sexy, rock & roll, free."

JONATHAN RINGEN

## HOT ROCK & ROLL HABERDASHER

# Worth & Worth



Orlando Palacios' midtown Manhattan workroom is crammed with state-of-the-art technology – state-of-the-art circa the 19th century, that is. "There are maybe 12 of these left on Earth," the hatmaker, 45, says, pointing to a paint-chipped Singer sewing machine capable of uniquely curved stitching. "It's from somewhere in the 1800s." Nearby are two "egg presses" –

massive contraptions that consist of levered metal domes and bags of heated sand that press hats into shape. A former architectural master craftsman, L.A.-born Palacios switched trades 20 years ago, working for (and ultimately buying) venerable New York haberdasher Worth & Worth. These days, offering hats that range in cost from \$125 to \$5,000 (the latter sum gets you a painstakingly hand-woven Ecuadorian montecristi), he's become the

go-to lid-crafter for musicians ranging from Jakob Dylan, Elvis Costello and the Virgins to Ratatat and Beyoncé. "Some like the hats minimal and worn-looking," Palacios says about catering to a broad swath of clients. "Others want the bells and whistles" – scalloped edges, "E" stitching, deadstock bands. "Either way, though, you're getting a real hat." JONAH WEINER

## HOT DIY GOURMET

# BEARDO ARTISANS

**I**N A BROOKLYN WAREHOUSE, BRAD Estabrooke makes gin the way New Yorkers did before Prohibition, using botanicals and local wheat. "We dreamt up this crazy idea a few years ago," says Estabrooke, who launched Breukelen Gin after being laid off as a bond trader. Thanks perhaps to the economic downturn, Estabrooke is just one of many urban craftsmen (and craftswomen) creating food and booze the way our forefathers did. Tattooed butchers prize heritage breeds that were made an afterthought by factory



The Mast brothers: Michael (left) and Rick

farming; picklers abound; Brooklyn's Mast Brothers make bean-to-bar chocolate. "Get Your War On" cartoonist David Rees even spoofs the trend, offering "Artisanal Pencil Sharpening" at \$15 a pop. PERVAIZ SHALLWANI

## HOT BACKLASH

# Fixed-Gear Bicycles



They've become a hipster accoutrement to rival skinny jeans: fixed-gear bikes, whose pedals never stop. The fad began with vegan messenger kids, but by the time Jared Leto worked a look-alike bike (his has a freewheel that allows coasting) into a 30 Seconds to Mars video, the appeal had become purely aesthetic. "At that level, it's like wearing high heels," scoffs Bike Snob NYC blogger Eben Weiss. "There's no performance benefit."



## HOT GRAPHIC NOVEL

## WAR IS BORING

**W**AR CAN BE DULL, ESPECIALLY for reporters. There are the long drives with shady fixers, and the mind-numbing tedium of sitting around all day in dusty, bullet-ridden hotel lobbies, anxiously waiting for something to blow up. But then something extraordinarily awful or humorous will happen that becomes a story worth writing. This is the hard-won wisdom of David Axe, who has spent the past five years of his life in many of the forgotten combat zones around the world, from the bombed-out ruins of Lebanon to the humid tropics of East Timor. He has been kidnapped two separate times, shot at with rocket launchers by the Taliban and chased through dark alleyways by doped-up child soldiers in Chad.

Axe isn't a traditional war correspondent. In fact, he hates the term. Instead, he finances his trips on his own, often by maxing out his credit cards. Because he's got no big-media conglomerate bankrolling him, Axe is free to go wherever he wants. Usually that means Africa, a continent Axe thinks is often ignored by the mainstream press. "Anderson Cooper's bosses wouldn't let him spend a week dick-

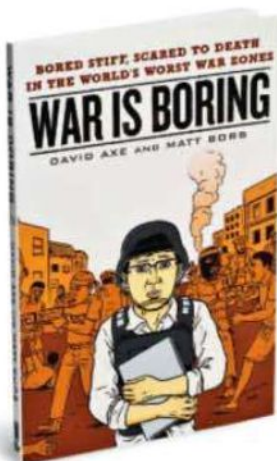
ing around São Tomé and Príncipe," he says. "Who's going to stop me?"

While Axe does file dispatches for big-name outlets like *Wired* and C-Span, he's found the most success through an unlikely outlet: comic books. Already, he's written two graphic novels, including *War Fix* and the recently released *War Is Boring*, with a third on the way. Comics, he says, lull people into a false sense of security. Then, just like in war, come the explosions and dismemberment. But covering so many conflicts has taken its toll.

Axe is flat broke, he's had two bouts of dysentery that leave him unable to digest many foods, and he has two incurable skin conditions. After one trip to Somalia, in which his

girlfriend was nearly attacked by an angry mob, he had a breakdown that forced him to move in with his parents for several months. Why he keeps going back is a question he can't answer. "It's true that I set out on this enterprise looking for big answers to big questions," Axe recently wrote from the Congo. But then he learned that nothing about war made sense. "We are the cleverest monsters," he once wrote. "And we deserve everything we've got coming."

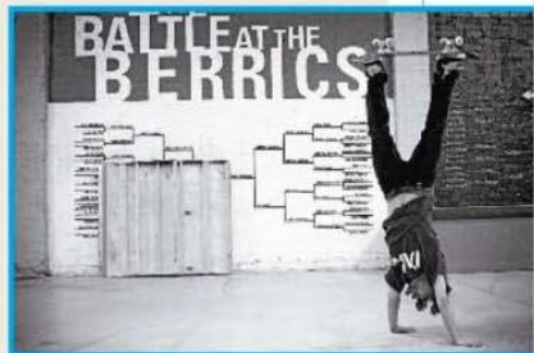
JESSE HYDE



## HOT ANTI-X GAMES

## The Berrics

Every day, the underground Los Angeles skate park the Berrics hosts some of the best skaters in the world – it's like a gym to which only Kobe, LeBron and Dwyane Wade have a key. Luckily everyone can watch what goes on through theberrics.com, which features new video clips of some of the sport's biggest names pulling off insane tricks. The result is a site that not only draws



more traffic than all the major skateboard magazines but is also redefining the ethos of the sport. There are no 75-foot ramps, no corporate sponsors and no crowds. Call it the anti-X Games. "It gives us ownership of the culture," says Steve Berra, a former Tony Hawk protégé who founded the Berrics with legendary street skater Eric Koston. "Before, you couldn't fight the direction skating was going. But now, thanks to the Internet, we can have a say."

J.H.

## HOT SICK MEME

## PEDOBEAR

Wanna piss people off? Turn a jolly bear into a mascot for pedophilia, then plaster the Net with him. That's what the pranksters at infamously lawless



website 4chan did. Photoshopping "Pedobear" into various squeamish settings – a nursery, a child's bathtub, etc. The (absurd) provocation worked: This fall, California cops issued a warning about the Pedobear "menace."

## HOT TIPPING POINT

## Cutting the Cord

According to one firm, up to 15 percent of U.S. households will be watching TV exclusively on the Internet by the end of this year. Cable subscriptions went down steeply last spring (that never happens!), and new Internet-only boxes like the Boxee Box and the rejiggered Apple TV – which now hooks up to Netflix – are lining up to fill the void. For the cable networks, 2011 is looking suspiciously like 2000 did for the music biz: the year the shit hits the fan.



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## HOT REDISCOVERY



Portis (left) on the set of the original *True Grit*

# CHARLES PORTIS

*The greatest American writer you've never heard of is being brought back to life later this year, courtesy of the Coen brothers*

FOR HALF A CENTURY, TWO GREAT recluses, J.D. Salinger and Thomas Pynchon, have cast a huge shadow across American fiction. But it's the one you've never heard of, the Arkansas mandarin yokel Charles Portis, who has pulled the truly impressive disappearing act – going so deep into seclusion that almost nobody even noticed he pulled back. But that's about to change, when, later this year, the Coen brothers release their adaptation of Portis' best-known novel, *True Grit*, a revenge Western that's much weirder, funnier and more complicated than you'd ever guess from Hollywood's first stab at it, the 1969 version that won John Wayne his only Oscar.

Since *True Grit* was published in 1968, Portis has produced only three other slim

volumes – *The Dog of the South*, *Masters of Atlantis* (Conan O'Brien's favorite novel) and *Gringos* – futile-quest picaresques marked by humor so dry that you almost can't explain what makes it funny.

Taken together, Portis' novels offer a portrait of an irrational America teeming with diffident heroes, aggrieved losers and small-time con men preying on each other to ultimately no effect.

Tom Wolfe, who worked with Portis as a reporter at the *New York Herald Tribune* in the early 1960s, called him "the original laconic cutup." A generation of novelists since then have simply regarded him as a writers' writer and have made his name a sort of secret password. Soon, they'll no longer have him to themselves.

WALTER KIRN

## HOT BROKEBACK PAPERBACKS

## 'M/M' Romances

Around 2007, amateur online scribbler and U.K. housewife Alex Beecroft discovered a burgeoning small-press genre called "M/M romance" – books in which men fall in love, get it on and get it on some more in assorted historical settings. Today, Beecroft (alongside writers Erastes, Laura Baumbach and Donald Hardy) is one of M/M's premier authors, and women just like her abound in her audience. Says Beecroft, "There are straight women who just don't connect with society's construction of what it means to be a woman."



## HOT FALL FICTION

## HOW TO READ THE AIR

Dinaw Mengestu's 2007 debut earned the kind of intense praise that can sink second novels. But with a brilliant follow-up – a young man retraces a journey his Ethiopian-immigrant parents took decades earlier – he upends that cliché. Among others: "If you say something is an 'immigrant story,' it's as if you can suddenly understand it with those two words," says Mengestu, who was recently named one of *The New Yorker's* "20 Under 40." "As if the 'grand immigrant narrative' covers the whole landscape of stories." JULIA HOLMES



## HOT DEBUT NOVEL

## THE INSTRUCTIONS



Adam Levin spent almost a decade turning a story about "little kids getting in fistfights" into an epic account of messianic tendencies at a day school. The

massive result, evocative of David Foster Wallace, is full of death-defying sentences, manic wit, exciting provocations and simple human warmth.

J.H.

## HOT HOLY GRAIL COOKBOOK

## MODERNIST CUISINE

Foodie and former Microsoft big Nathan Myhrvold enlisted top science and food minds to help him make *Modernist Cuisine*, a six-volume, 2,400-page, \$625 cookbook/technical manual. The book, out next spring, dives into the culinary revolution waged by lab-equipment-wielding chefs like El Bulli's Ferrán Adrià and WD-50's Wylie Dufresne. Momofuku's David Chang contributed and was blown away: "Something like this will never happen again." PERVAIZ SHALLWANI





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# WEED SCIENCE

*One California lab is refining, testing and looking for the perfect strain of cannabis*

**S**TEEP HILL SEEMS LIKE ANY OTHER lab in the Bay Area – scientists in white lab coats, fluorescent lights, a stale, antiseptic feel – except for one thing. It smells like pot. The Oakland lab, which tests the purity and potency of marijuana, is the latest sign that weed isn't just on its way toward legality in California – it's already going corporate. Steep Hill's

Steep Hill lab tests pot for purity.



## HOT DRUG LAB

clients include some of California's biggest medical-marijuana shops, which use the lab's results to ensure the quality control of different strains of weed. It's just a matter of time, says Steep Hill co-founder Dave Lampach, before Madison Avenue comes calling. "We're already seeing some capital investment," Lampach says. "But once it's legal, you're going to see companies moving in with \$100 million investments."

The lab tests for THC content and contaminants but is also trying to scientifically prove the medicinal value of marijuana.

It's been established through clinical trials that the drug can relieve suffering for people with HIV and AIDS, and studies suggest THC may alleviate pain for people with multiple sclerosis. New research also indicates that a compound in cannabis called CBD may decrease inflammation among patients with Crohn's disease and that it may reduce neurological problems associated with MS. Other research has found that CBD may even slow the growth of breast-cancer cells.

The bad news is that generations of growers have bred CBD out of existence because it counteracts THC, which is what gets people high. In fact, of the 12,000 strains Steep Hill recently tested for CBD, only 12 had significant levels of the compound. The lab is now working with growers and Oakland's Harborside Health Center, the largest dispensary in the U.S., to identify and develop pot high in CBD. "Regardless of what happens in California's November's referendum on marijuana," says Addison DeMoura, who founded Steep Hill with Lampach, "we've added legitimacy and safety standards to the industry, which will help push things towards the inevitability of legalization."

JESSE HYDE

## HOT DESTINATION

Grateful Meds in Nederland, Colorado



## Welcome to Stonerville, USA

There is perhaps no easier place to score (legal) weed in America than in the tiny town of Nederland, Colorado. Tucked away in the Rockies, 16 miles from Boulder, the rugged mining community of 1,400 legalized pot earlier this year – with no exceptions, meaning that there are no criminal penalties for buying, smoking or growing marijuana for anyone age 21 or older. The law is largely symbolic (state laws trump it), but for all intents and purposes, weed is legal in Nederland. "If you're burning a joint in the park, you're not going to get a ticket," says Mark Rose, the founder of Grateful Meds, one of seven dispensaries in town. "They might ask you to be more discreet, but that's all. It's amazing how much has changed. You used to get thrown in jail for smoking. And last year we did \$2 million in sales."

J.H.

## HOT LEGAL HIGHS

### BEST WEB DRUGS

With Google and a credit card, a whole new world of MDMA-like chemicals is totally ready to be FedEx-ed to your pad. Are they safe? Nobody knows! But they are (pretty much) legal.

### MEPHEDRONE

**WHAT IT IS:** Also known as Meow Meow and Plant Food, Meph swept the U.K. this year, where it was available at head shops. It has since been outlawed.

**WHAT IT DOES:** Mephedrone's high is a quick hit somewhere between cocaine and Ecstasy. It's still legal in the U.S., although probably not for long.

### 6-APB

**WHAT IT IS:** The hottest of the new online highs – which also goes by the names Fury and Benzo Fury – is a close chemical cousin of the popular Ecstasy-like club drug MDA.

**WHAT IT DOES:** Online reports suggest it provides a trippier, longer-lasting high than Ecstasy. It's not cheap – one site sells it for \$15 a dose.

### OCEAN

**WHAT IT IS:** A white powder with a long chemical name in professionally designed sachets the size of a sugar packet.

**WHAT IT DOES:** According to the manufacturer, "Ocean is a cozy, cuddly body high with a slight euphoric effect and mood lift." One user reports to RS that mixing a packet with champagne is totally pleasant.



HOT "HARD KNOCKS" ZEN "OK ISN'T A POSITION" >>> HOT TOO HOT FOR 'SESAME STREET' KATY PERRY'S CLEAVAGE >>>



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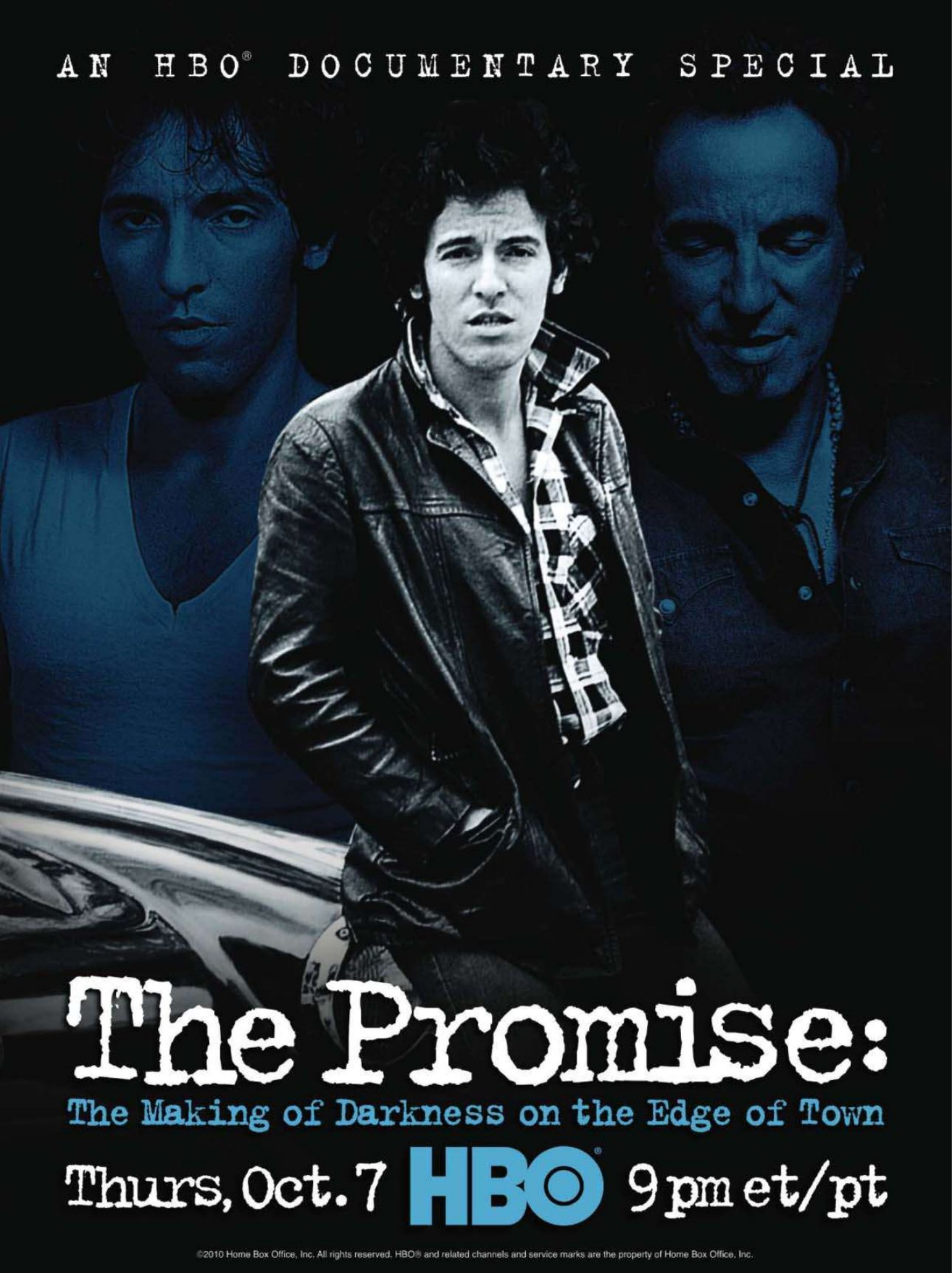


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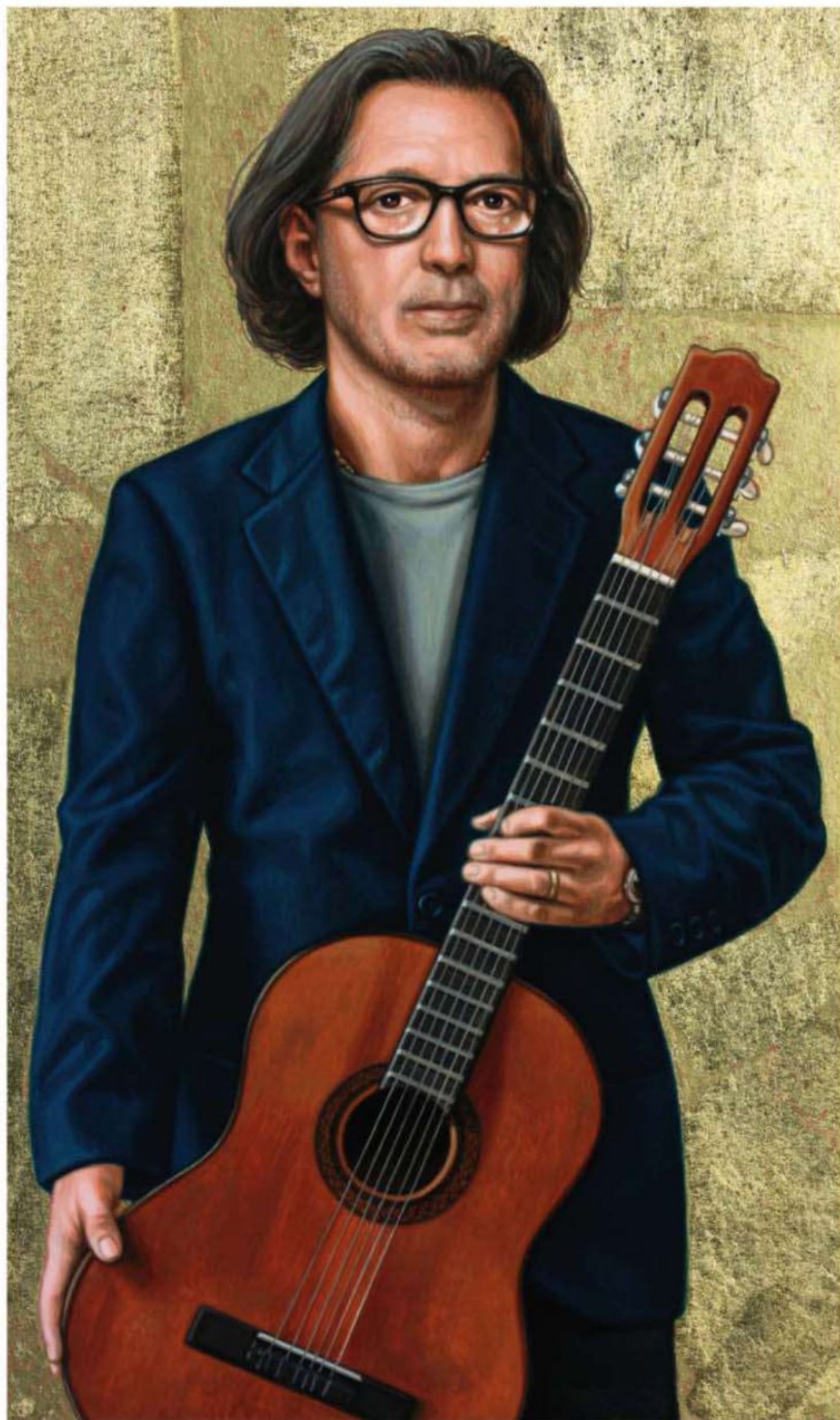
The Making of Darkness on the Edge of Town

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# Reviews

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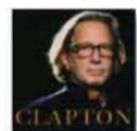
Deeper than the blues: Clapton delivers his most personal set of covers yet

## Eric Clapton

★★★★★

Clapton *Reprise*

BY DAVID FRICKE



Eric Clapton basically makes two kinds of solo albums. There are his escapes from the strict letter and law of electric blues: the brisk white soul of 1970's *Eric Clapton*; the cruising-speed funk and reggae on 1974's *461 Ocean Boulevard*; the 1992 smash *Unplugged*. Then there are the homecomings, like 2000's *Riding With the King*, made with his idol B.B. King, and the 2004 Robert Johnson tribute, *Me and Mr. Johnson*.

*Clapton* is both impulses in one record, for the first time: a serenely masterful engagement with roots – the guitarist co-wrote just one original – that is all over the place in repertoire yet devoutly grounded in its roaming. Irving Berlin's "How Deep Is the Ocean" comes with an earnest, sandy Clapton vocal and lighthouse beams of trumpet by Wynton Marsalis. Little Walter's "Can't Hold Out Much Longer" has the crusty flair of Clapton's 1965 and '66 recordings with John Mayall. A pair of Fats Waller romps are decked out in New Orleans brass and pianos, one of them played by Allen Toussaint.

If you need the old prowess, stick to the live half of Cream's *Wheels of Fire*. In "Hard Times Blues," first cut in 1935 by the obscure St. Louis bluesman Lane Hardin, Clapton doesn't even solo – he robustly strums a mandolin. Guitarist Doyle Bramhall II, his co-producer,



does the electric-slide honors. Derek Trucks contributes the wiry bottleneck flourishes in Hoagy Carmichael's "Rocking Chair," a porch-party memoir (that's how Louis Armstrong first did it in 1929) that Clapton strips back, in his own guitar fills and singing, to a slow, dusty breeze. Even when Clapton steps out on guitar in the J.J. Cale song "Everything Will Be Alright," the notes come in jabs and bursts, in a rounded jazzy tone against a soft bed of strings. It's still blues, but in the way King made satin feel down home in "The Thrill Is Gone."

As a bluesman, Clapton has had his doctrinaire moments: He quit the Yardbirds in 1965 because he thought they'd gone soft. But one of his first original songs on record was a hymn, "Presence of the Lord," on *Blind Faith*, and Clapton's dogged connection to the blues is a lot about thanks – for the empowering solace he always finds there. The opening track on *Clapton*, Lil' Son Jackson's "Travelin' Alone," is outfitted in gritty comforts: a slinky groove, soul-bar organ and telegraphic spurts of guitar. And the closing version of "Autumn Leaves" should not come as a shock. The song has, in its way, the same weight of regret as Johnson's "Love in Vain," and Clapton, who knows loss and redemption well, sings it with a straight low-sugar class that is perfectly blue.

Inevitably, perhaps, Clapton's one new song, "Run Back to Your Side," written with Bramhall, doesn't sound old enough, too close to Clapton's hit cover of Cale's "After Midnight." Much better is the way those two reunite here in the Robert Wilkins blues "That's No Way to Get Along" (covered by the Rolling Stones as "Prodigal Son" on *Beggars Banquet*). Clapton and Cale throw lines back and forth like pilgrims sharing a ride, in near-twin growls over a bumpy-road rhythm. Bramhall does the slide work again, but it is Clapton's firm rhythm work – rolling clusters of licks and strum – that keeps pushing the song, and band, all the way home.

**Key Tracks:** "That's No Way to Get Along," "Hard Times Blues"

# Ronson's Star-Studded Soul Party

Amy Winehouse's producer calls in famous friends for sleek, big-eared dance album

Mark Ronson and the Business Intl ★★★★★½

Record Collection RCA



The album title cuts to the chase. Like all good DJs, Mark Ronson is first and foremost a collector, the kind of guy with untold 45s lining his loft. In his production work for Lily Allen and Amy Winehouse, he proved to be one of music's wonkiest wonks, bringing encyclopedic pop knowledge to geeked-out party music. Some other things that Ronson collects: vintage keyboards and cool friends. His third album is full of chiming synths and guests that run from Simon Le Bon to Ghostface to the London Gay Men's Choir. The single "Bang Bang Bang" pairs Q-Tip and the New York duo MDNR in a buoyant electro trifle; "Glass Mountain Trust" finds D'Angelo doing his best Prince impression. It could be a messy grab bag, but *Record Collection* hangs together as an album. Ronson is the rare DJ-producer who is as fluent with melodies as he is with beats. (Check the fiendishly catchy "Lose It [In the End]," sung by Ronson himself.) He doesn't just love old music, he understands it: In songs like the stormy "Somebody to Love Me," he does for 1980s synth pop what he did for 1960s girl-group soul on Winehouse's *Back to Black*, pushing past kitsch revivalism to evoke a timelessly moody romanticism. He's a connoisseur with a heart. JODY ROSEN

**Key Tracks:** "Lose It (In the End)," "Bang Bang Bang"



**THE CONNOISSEUR**  
Ronson makes geeked-out dance music.

## Bruno Mars

★★★★½

Doo-Wops & Hooligans

Elektra

Pop crooner of the moment delivers near-flawless debut



Turn on your radio. Hear that voice, a feathery tenor with a hint of soulful grit? It belongs to Bruno Mars, the 25-year-old Hawaiian newcomer featured on smash hits like B.o.B's "Nothin' on You" and Travie McCoy's "Billionaire." *Doo-Wops & Hooligans* proves that Mars is a natural – a lavishly gifted melodist (check the surging "Grenade") and an engaging singer. It's the year's finest pop debut: 10 near-perfect songs that move from power ballads to bedroom anthems to pop-reggae and deliver pleasure without pretension. Call it bubblegum that eats like a meal. J.R.

**Key Tracks:** "Grenade," "Just the Way You Are," "Our First Time"

## Sufjan Stevens

★★★★½

The Age of Adz *Asthmatic Kitty*

The weirdo beauty of an indie-rock maximalist



Sufjan Stevens is a restless man. Weeks after dropping the *All Delighted People* EP, Stevens returns with *The Age of Adz*, which conjures a peyote ritual with Aphex Twin and the Mormon Tabernacle Choir. It's a semiconcept record, using work by the artist Royal Robertson as a springboard for music that evokes a visionary psyche. Amid the storm of electronics, brass and spirit voices, melodies surface. On "Impossible Soul," Stevens rocks an Auto-Tuned falsetto; elsewhere, he chants, "I'm not fucking around!" Be assured: He's not. WILL HERMES

**Key Tracks:** "I Walked," "Too Much," "Impossible Soul"



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*-Mountain*



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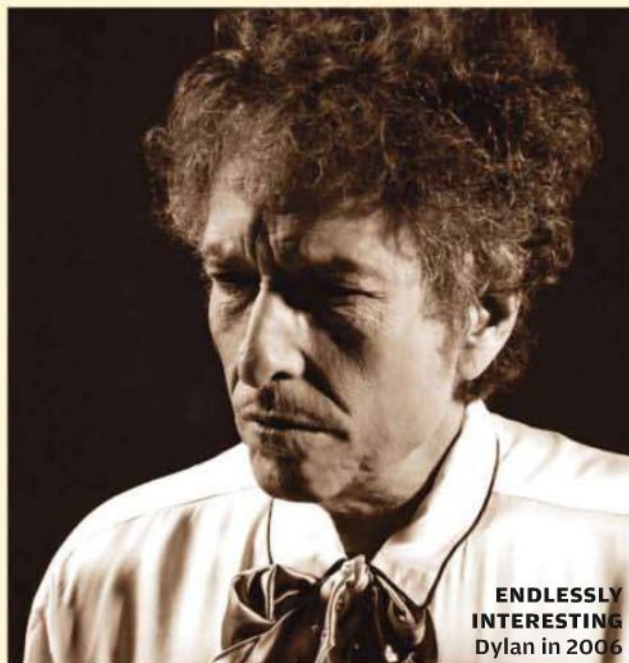
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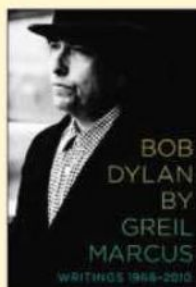


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## BOOKS



**ENDLESSLY  
INTERESTING**  
Dylan in 2006



### Bob Dylan: Writings 1968-2010 ★★★★★<sup>1/2</sup>

**Greil Marcus** *PublicAffairs*

As a critic, Greil Marcus is a tough crowd – his bullshit detector should get some kind of Nobel Prize. No writer has followed Bob Dylan as closely or as passionately as Marcus, who makes the man's whole career seem like one wild American adventure. And nobody has ever written about Dylan with so much savage wit. (Comparing

*Street Legal* to Barry White? In 1978? That's just genius.)

In this essential anthology, Marcus chronicles Dylan's ups and downs – through great albums, bad albums, bizarre live shows and forgotten TV appearances. He's brutally funny on Dylan's flops, from his famous 1970 ROLLING STONE review of Dylan's *Self Portrait* (opening line: "What is this shit?") to his equally incisive 1985 breakdown of *Empire Burlesque*. He also reviews the Band's 1976 *Last Waltz* concert in San Francisco, well before the movie version, and notes, "Damned if someone didn't yell for 'Free Bird.'" The collection reads like the journal of a 40-year love story. Even when Dylan stumbles, Marcus keeps listening for glimmers of greatness like the 1984 live version of "Tangled Up in Blue": "He played with the song, laughed with it, brought it to life, no doubt inventing as he sang." Through it all, Marcus' words are restless and probing – a true match for Dylan's voice.

ROB SHEFFIELD



### Becoming Elektra: The True Story of Jac Holzman's Visionary Record Label ★★★★★

**Mick Houghton** *Jawbone*

Hundreds of albums have made fans want to start bands; this is a book that might inspire a new record label. Extensively detailed and lavishly illustrated, *Becoming Elektra* tells the story of the label New Yorker Jac Holzman founded in 1950 as a home to mostly independent folk and world music. Holzman walked away in 1973, shortly after signing Queen, but by then he had turned Elektra into a fiercely adventurous musical empire, signing bands based on what moved him rather than on what he thought would sell: the Doors, Judy Collins, the MC5, Tim Buckley, Bread and dozens of other wildly dissimilar acts. Random fascinating fact: Woody Allen based the character Annie Hall partly on Judy Henske, a big-voiced L.A. beatnik and 1963 Elektra signee.

BARRY WALTERS



# TOP SINGLES

## Madonna ★★½ "Set the Right" *Leaked*

A just-surfaced outtake from 2003's *American Life*, "Set the Right" drops a simple, catchy tune over a blend of folky guitar and austere electronics. Less successful are Madonna's odd delivery (proper British vowels, casual Midwestern r's) and disingenuous claim that she won't take political sides.

BARRY WALTERS

## Chromeo feat. Ezra Koenig ★★★★½

"I Could Be Wrong"  
*iTunes*

On this magnificently cheesy synth-pop jam, indie rock's reigning Columbia grad (Vampire Weekend's Koenig) duets with electro-funk's reigning Columbia Ph.D. candidate (Chromeo's Dave 1), singing in falsetto about a mind-game-playing hottie. The real scene-stealer, though, is the scorching sax solo at the end.

JONAH WEINER

## Hugo ★★★ "99 Problems"

*All major services*

Ever wonder what a Robert Plant reworking of Jay-Z's "99 Problems" might sound like? New Roc Nation signee Hugo has the answer. This mystic acoustic number feels a bit like a novelty, but the heavy, banjo-laden production hits hard.

ANDY GREENE

## Glasser ★★½ "Home" *All major services*

Art-rock gorgeousness from a newcomer to watch: Witchy woman Cameron Mesirow lays wind-swept vocals over a plinking marimba riff, then ups the drama with a flood of synths and an epically pining refrain. J.W.



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tracks at [rollingstone.com/songs](http://rollingstone.com/songs).



Bono in Istanbul

## U2's New Live Tracks: Big Riffs, Bigger Ballads

### U2 ★★★★★ **BOOTLEG**

"Mercy," "Return of the Stingray Guitar," "Glastonbury," "Every Breaking Wave"

U2 have made their current European tour a testing ground for new material. The best of the new live songs is "Mercy," cut during the sessions for 2004's *How to Dismantle an Atomic Bomb* but not on the album. The band has reworked "Mercy" for the stage, turning it into a big bear hug of a ballad that almost sounds like it could have

gone on *Joshua Tree*. "You're going to kill me, and I want to die," Bono sings against the Edge's spacey arpeggios. "We were meant for each other." Other tracks that thrilled fans this summer include the intensely rocking "Return of the Stingray Guitar," the psychedelic "Glastonbury" and the starkly beautiful "Every Breaking Wave." The latter recalls "All I Want Is You," with Bono delivering dark poetry like "The waves know we're on the rocks/Drowning is no sin." U2 say they have four separate albums in the works; if so, this is a good start.

ANDY GREENE

## DJ Shadow's Death Groove

### DJ Shadow ★★½

"Def Surrounds Us" *Leaked*

After secretly planting vinyl copies in record shops across Europe, the master of surreal, sample-drenched electronica drops a digital version of this single, his first in four years. It's a time-warping combo of hand claps, video-game bleeps, Nineties jungle break beats and a slow-mo electric-guitar arpeggio, all unspooling amid snippets of the spoken phrase "Though we are alive, death surrounds us." (Thanks for the reminder, Mr. Brightside!) "I've Been Trying," the psych-folk-soul B side, deepens the trance. Good to have you back, Swami.

WILL HERMES

## Kanye Takes a Breather

### Kanye West ★★★

"Lord Lord Lord" *Leaked*

Kanye visits the chill-out lounge, delivering a seven-minute-plus opus that's languid in the extreme: Psychedelic-soul synths float on a groove that wouldn't sound out of place on your smooth-jazz station. The rapping is equally laid-back: Mos Def purrs abstractions ("Ecstatic patterns in the calendar design"); Swizz Beatz slurs boasts about cars and suede attire; Raekwon muses on weed-smoking. Kanye, meanwhile, is full of punch lines - "If I'm a douche, then put me in your coochie" - which is about as close to chilled-out as pop's spaz-in-chief ever gets.

JODY ROSEN

## BOOTLEGS

### Eminem and Jay-Z Yankee Stadium, New York, September 13th

Talk about home-field advantage. On the New York leg of his minitour with Jay-Z, Eminem sounded strong, thrilling the crowd with hits like "My Name Is." But Jay-Z outshone his co-headliner, in part by having the better guest list: He brought out Beyoncé (natch) to help with "Young Forever" and ceded the stage to Kanye West, who performed a schizo miniset that featured Jay on "Power (Remix)." But Jay also showed more energy, blazing through massive hits like "Big Pimpin'" with a stomping enthusiasm that recalled some other New York legends: the Ramones. A.G.



Jay-Z

### Crosby, Stills, Nash and Young Seattle Center, July 9th, 1974

Crosby, Stills, Nash and Young kicked off their 1974 reunion tour with a nearly four-hour set that left them hoarse the next day. This newly unearthed tape of the complete performance is full of gems, from David Crosby's tender "Carry Me" to Graham Nash's defiant "Immigration Man" to Neil Young's frightening "Revolution Blues." A.G.



## Santana ★★★

Guitar Heaven:  
The Greatest Guitar Classics  
of All Time *Arista*

**Guitarist and friends dial up  
straight-ahead rock covers**



*Guitar Heaven* reprises the cameo-heavy formula Carlos Santana has used since 1999's *Supernatural*, only this time the celeb vocalists lay into an assortment of classic-rock covers. The performances are mostly faithful to the originals, and Chris Daughtry gives Def Leppard's "Photograph" a credible kick. But only about half the songs get any traction – "Back in Black," where Nas rhymes beside anonymous rock-chick vocals, sounds like a Super Bowl halftime show. The best turn is from a smaller name: India.Arie, who finds the soul in "While My Guitar Gently Weeps." As for Santana? Smooth, as usual. **MARK KEMP**

**Key Tracks:** "Photograph," "While My Guitar Gently Weeps"

## Das Racist ★★★½

Sit Down, Man *Greedhead*  
Brooklyn college-rap duo  
bring bong-rattling hilarity



If all you knew of Himanshu Suri and Victor Vazquez was their stoned spoof "Combination Pizza Hut and Taco Bell," you might dismiss the rap surrealists as an amusing waste of a liberal-arts degree. In fact, their debut mixtape, *Shut Up, Dude*, was a hyperliterate good time, kicking flavor like "W.E.B. Du Bois/We be da boys." This new mixtape feels more pro, bringing in name producers (Diplo, Dame Grease) while joking about Dwight Schrute and Peggy Noonan. On "hahahaha jk?," they ponder a Middle America takeover: "We're not racists/We love white people/Ford trucks, apple pies, bald eagles." They're a Beastie Boys for the Tea Party era. **JON DOLAN**

**Key Tracks:** "Puerto Rican Cousins," "All Tan Everything"

## The Corin Tucker Band

★★★½

1,000 Years *Kill Rock Stars*

**The Sleater-Kinney  
frontwoman, reborn**



Like Patti Smith, Corin Tucker took time off from being a punk-rock heroine to become a mom. The lyrics to her solo debut reflect that, touching on kids, distant partners and hunger for a former self. "Who is the zombie that is wearing Mommy's clothes?" she sings, as weary rocker moms worldwide nod in solidarity. She's not shredding the awesome vocal cords so much, but she gets fierce in other ways, trying on cellos and piano ballads. When she finally cranks it up Sleater-Kinney-style on "Doubt," it feels earned: a cry of self-determination, as inspiring as ever. **WILL HERMES**

**Key Tracks:** "Doubt," "Miles Away," "Half a World Away"

## Gucci Mane

★★★

The Appeal: Georgia's Most  
Wanted *Warner Bros.*

**Southern MC keeps it  
laid-back and low-concept**



This Atlanta mush mouth serves up hip-hop comfort food: rich synth beats; laid-back cadences; songs that find a gloriously low concept and stick to it ("Making Love to the Money," about all the different ways Gucci tries to impregnate his Benjamins, is a goofy standout here). But *The Appeal*, his third official album, suggests that Gucci's menu could use an update. Besides the distortion-laced "Gucci Time," the biggest change-ups here are drab gangsta ballads: "Haterade" features Pharrell at his most insufferably croon-y, and "O'Dog" makes you actually wish guest singer Wyclef would stick to politics. **JONAH WEINER**

**Key Tracks:** "Making Love to the Money," "Gucci Time"

FOR WHEN YOU'RE  
**SICK.**





## Richard Thompson

★★★★½

Dream Attic/Shout Factory

**Folk-rock guitar god turns the stage into his studio**



Richard Thompson shines brightest in concert, so it makes sense that the elder statesman of English folk rock recorded his new album on tour. *Dream Attic* is typically caustic, informed by ancient melodies and today's Twitter feed. "The Money Shuffle" is a too-easy swipe at Goldman Sachs culture ("Bend over a little/I think you'll feel my financial muscle"), and "Burning Man" marvels at the desert festival. The best songs let the band dazzle. Reedman Pete Zorn earns props, but Thompson's guitar is the star: rippling and roaring. Thompson is 61, and he'll still kick your ass. **W.H.**

**Key Tracks:** "The Money Shuffle," "Burning Man"

## John and Yoko's Last Labor of Love, Revisited

**Like starting over: Remixed version of 'Fantasy' brings out the joy**

John Lennon and Yoko Ono ★★★★★

REISSUE

Double Fantasy/EMI



*Double Fantasy* was supposed to be a love album – instead, it became a death album. John Lennon was murdered within days of its release, and these songs became part of the world's mourning process. The achievement of this remastered version is that it lets you hear the music as it was meant to be: a celebration rather than a farewell. Lennon's voice sounds incredibly robust – check out the doo-wop exuberance of "(Just Like) Starting Over." He and Yoko Ono take turns singing lead; after he snarls "I'm Losing You," Ono responds with "I'm Moving On." But the overall effect is two musicians sharing an emotional journey, culminating in the gorgeous "Beautiful Boy (Darling Boy)."

### Key Tracks:

"(Just Like) Starting Over," "I'm Losing You"



**EQUAL PARTNERS**  
Ono and Lennon take a stroll.

This edition adds a second disc with an Ono-supervised *Stripped Down* remix, which puts even more focus on the vocals. The set is part of a reissue series for Lennon's 70th birthday; the place to go next is 1984's *Milk and Honey*, a superb outtake collection featuring "I'm Stepping Out," where Daddy turns off *Sesame Street* and decides he needs a night on the town. Five years after becoming a househusband, Lennon had fallen back in love with rock & roll. And because he loved music as fiercely as he loved Yoko and Sean, the songs he wrote for them remain soulful classics.

ROB SHEFFIELD



FOR WHEN YOU'RE  
**SICK OF**  
THE 3 O'CLOCK  
**SLUMP.**

IT'S NOT A COUGH DROP.  
IT'S A MOUTH-WATERING-DELICIOUS  
FRUITY-REFRESHING-LIFT **DROP.**



## Trey Songz ★★

Passion, Pain & Pleasure

Songbook/Atlantic

**Loverman's fourth LP is more predictable than seductive**



Twenty-five-year-old Trey Songz made ladies squeal last spring with a sultry *MTV Unplugged* cover of Kings of Leon's "Use Somebody." The R&B smoothie's fourth record has no such surprises, notwithstanding a brassy, helium-voiced cameo from Nicki Minaj on the catchy, booze-celebrating "Bottoms Up." Otherwise it's just steady mackin' over dull, airbrushed slow-jams, as Songz rhymes "just like a kid who found some candy" with "let me feel and find your panties." Yes, he invented sex, as an earlier single noted. But when he declares, "The only thing inside my mind is 'mm-hmm,'" it's hard not to say, "Really?"

WILL HERMES

**Key Tracks:** "Bottoms Up," "Red Lipstick"

## Duran Duran

★★★★½

REISSUE

Notorious Capitol/EMI

**Duran's 1986 funk-pop album gets a new sheen**



*Notorious* caught Duran Duran in transition: By the time the album was released, two of three members named Taylor had jumped ship, and the LP showed that Duran had lost some of the worldbeating hook savvy that made them famous. But the 1986 record still packs funk-lite charms, such as producer Nile Rodgers' slinky guitars and the soulful "Skin Trade." This remastered version crisps up the title track and unearths some comically dated remixes, including a version of "Meet El Presidente" that sounds like it was produced by Miami Sound Machine. But the real draw is a bonus DVD featuring a gauzily shot 1987 show filled with rakish charm and leather trousers.

CARYN GANZ

**Key Tracks:** "Notorious," "Skin Trade"

## BUY THESE NOW

### Neil Young

*Le Noise Reprise*

Young goes into the studio with producer Daniel Lanois but without a band, accompanying himself on guitar with maximum fuzz and electronics – and delving deep into the chaos of memory and fear.

### Jamey Johnson

*The Guitar Song Mercury*

A country epic for hard times: Nashville insurgent Johnson turns in two discs of tears and triumphs, taking the pulse of a nation hitting the skids and a singer hitting the big time.

### John Legend and the Roots

*Wake Up! Columbia*

The funk-soul band of your dreams, with politics: Legend and the Roots come together for a series of covers from the heyday of protest soul. They're not imitators – they're heirs.

## Salem ★★★

King Night LAMSound

**Drugged-out music for the End of Days**



With a backstory that includes gas-station hooking and heroin addiction, Michigan electro-extremists Salem are spooky straightaway. Then their quicksand sound sucks you down: The trio's debut is a cesspool of New Wave synths, goth-shoegaze moans, slow-mo raps and the sort of new-school blown-speaker beats that have recently infiltrated car commercials (go, Sleigh Bells!). What endorsement deals Salem might warrant isn't quite clear: "Sick" pours syrup raps over a chorus that sounds like witches chanting "six-six-six," and the title track employs a version of the Christmas fave "O Holy Night" to conjure Yuletide carolers being boiled in oil. A stocking stuffer for that kid in the trench coat.

W.H.

**Key Tracks:** "King Night," "Sick," "Release da Boar"

## Philip Selway

★★★★

Familial Nonesuch

**Radiohead drummer steps out as a brooding folkie**



Jonny Greenwood writes orchestral scores; Thom Yorke programs glitch beats; drummer Phil Selway evidently spends his time off from Radiohead as a closet art folkie. His debut reveals a delicate high-tenor voice (akin to Yorke's but less tortured), using acoustic guitars in songs that recall U.K. brooders like John Martyn and Nick Drake. With Wilco's Glenn Kotche and Patrick Sansone building backdrops, Selway visits some dark places. "What we see in the cold light/Can scare us all," he whispers in the gorgeous ballad "Don't Look Down." You expected "Kumbaya"? News flash: Radiohead officially have another songwriter.

W.H.

**Key Tracks:** "Beyond Reason," "Don't Look Down"

## Ben Folds and Nick Hornby ★★★

Lonely Avenue Nonesuch

**American piano man and English novelist come up flat**



Bob Dylan wrote most of *Desire* with a playwright, but collaborations between musicians and literary figures are usually pretty painful. This one isn't without promise: Nick Hornby's novel *High Fidelity* is a music-geek classic, and Ben Folds is great at turning wordy lyrics into crafty pop. But formal knowledge works against them as they go from unfunny Randy Newman ("Levi Johnston's Blues") to too-cute Barry Manilow ("Belinda") to overdone Elvis Costello ("Password," about breaking into a girlfriend's e-mail). Folds doesn't do a bad job shaping Hornby's clunky song prose, but even Dylan couldn't do much with "Hope is a liar, a cheat and a tease/Hope comes near you/Kick its backside."

JON DOLAN

**Key Tracks:** "From Above," "Doc Pomus," "Saskia Hamilton"

## The Black Angels

★★★★½

Phosphene Dream

Blue Horizon

**Texas rockers channel bad vibes in good ways**



The third album from this Austin quintet is a psych-rock salvo that evokes a variety of freaky images: gnarly opium dens, paisley-clad go-go dancers, the acid-trip scene from *Easy Rider*. *Phosphene Dream* kicks off with a storm of tremolo guitars and zombie-croon vocals called "Bad Vibrations" and moves on to doomy cuts like the Velvet Underground-style drone "True Believers." It's not all zonked heaviness: There are smartly layered riffs and echo-splattered melodies, and the Angels brighten up on tracks like "Telephone," a 119-second nugget that would have fit in on an early Kinks album.

CHRISTIAN HOARD

**Key Tracks:** "Bad Vibrations," "Telephone," "True Believers"

## Zac Brown Band

★★★★

You Get What You Give

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**"Chicken Fried" singer offers country-rock life lessons**



"If you're honest and open, he will write you a song," sings Zac Brown in "Martin," an ode to his acoustic guitar. Honesty and openness are articles of faith for Brown, whose smash 2008 single, "Chicken Fried," made him an overnight country star. He specializes in high-earnest homespun: woodsy songs with three-part-harmony vocals and lyrics full of folksy homilies. Brown is a fine guitarist who sings with husky warmth, and the ZBB have jam-band chops and a songwriterly knack for hooks. But just when you're starting to enjoy the sound, another of Brown's two-bit life lessons – "Hear what the land has to say/Quiet your mind" – hits with a thud.

JODY ROSEN

**Key Tracks:** "As She's Walking Away," "Whiskey's Gone"



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**RAIDERS OF THE FACEBOOK ARK**  
Andrew Garfield,  
Joseph Mazzello,  
Jesse Eisenberg  
(from left)

# Friend This!

Digging into the what-if? and the WTF! of Facebook, David Fincher crafts a landmark movie that defines a generation **By Peter Travers**

## The Social Network ★★★★★

Jesse Eisenberg, Andrew Garfield, Justin Timberlake  
**Directed by David Fincher**

HERE'S A POKE TO USERS and nonusers of Facebook: *The Social Network* isn't some yawny visual aid on how the website grew from a few hundred users at Harvard in 2004 to a 2010 global reach of half a billion. *The Social Network* is a hard-charging beast of a movie with a full tank of creative gas that keeps it humming from start to finish (hell of a middle, too). Sure, it gives you the facts about how then-Harvard undergrad Mark Zuckerberg (a never-better Jesse Eisenberg) made billions by helping technology win the battle against actual human contact. But it's also about the nation of narcissists we've become, reshaping who we are on Facebook in the hope of being friend-ed by other users who may or may not be lying their asses off. Bracingly smart, brutally

funny and acted to perfection without exception, *The Social Network* lights up a dim movie sky with flares of startling brilliance. Director David Fincher (*Fight Club*, *Seven*, *Zodiac*) puts his visual mastery to work on the verbal pyrotechnics in the dynamite, dick-swinging script by Aaron Sorkin (*The West Wing*), and they both do the best and ballsiest work of their careers. *The Social Network* gets you drunk on movies again. It deserves to go viral.

In the film's wow of an opener, set in 2003, Sorkin speculatively places Mark at a campus bar, where he is driving his girlfriend nuts by avoiding eye contact, juggling a dozen topics at once and ignoring her reaction to virtually everything. She is Erica, and as played like a gathering storm by Rooney Mara, winner of the coveted title role in Fincher's *The Girl With the Dragon Tattoo*, she is steaming. It's a setup for disaster: tech nerd versus the real live girl from Boston University he uses to unload on. Fed up

with his condescension and his obsession with getting into one of Harvard's elite "final clubs," Erica calls him an asshole and splits. A shattered Mark returns to the dorm he shares with Dustin Moskovitz (Joseph Mazzello) and Chris Hughes (Patrick Mapel), and, beer in hand, blogs out his festering rage, attacking Erica as a flat-chested bitch, hacking into photo files of female Harvard undergrads and ranking them on a hotness scale. Out of anger over being socially rejected, a social network is born.

Who gets the credit/blame? There's no doubt Mark is the CEO of a Facebook complex currently valued at \$25 billion. But don't forget his BFF, Brazilian student Eduardo Saverin (Andrew Garfield), who provided the business plan and early financing. And then there's the memorable Winklevoss twins, Cameron and Tyler (both played by Armie Hammer, with Josh Pence doing duty as a body double). The Winklevi, as Mark calls them,

are blond vikings on the Harvard rowing crew and, in their eyes, the originators of Facebook. They were the ones who asked Mark to help them build a Harvard computer-dating service. They all successfully sued for a piece of the pie they claim that Mark the Judas screwed them out of when he took his idea to Silicon Valley and global dominance. Not a drop of blood is spilled in *The Social Network*, but you can't miss the scar tissue.

As advertised, it's a tale of sex, money, genius and betrayal. But can a script based on what Zuckerberg calls "fiction" dig out the truth? The film's maverick producer, Scott Rudin, paraphrasing a line from Sorkin's *A Few Good Men*, argues that "there is no such thing as the truth." He has a point. That's why Sorkin, using research compiled by journalist Ben Mezrich for his book *The Accidental Billionaires*, written concurrently with the script, went to court depositions of Zuckerberg, Saverin and the Winklevi and created a fact-based structure that gives the movie multiple points of view. The *Rashomon* idea is inspired, and Fincher directs it with thrilling cinematic fervor. How? By effectively giving each character his own Facebook page. Watch the movie and decide who you want to add as a friend.

It won't be easy. Sorkin and Fincher come down hard on these characters, without skimping on complexity and sympathy. Eisenberg delivers a tour de force, nimbly negotiating Sorkin's rat-a-tat dialogue and revealing how alienation and loneliness actually fuel Mark's ambition. More crucially, Eisenberg lets us see the chinks in Mark's armor, unearthing long-buried feelings when Napster co-founder Sean Parker (Justin Timberlake) enters the scene, ready to take Facebook to the next level even if it means leaving Eduardo behind as roadkill. Timberlake is phenomenal, a revelation, even.



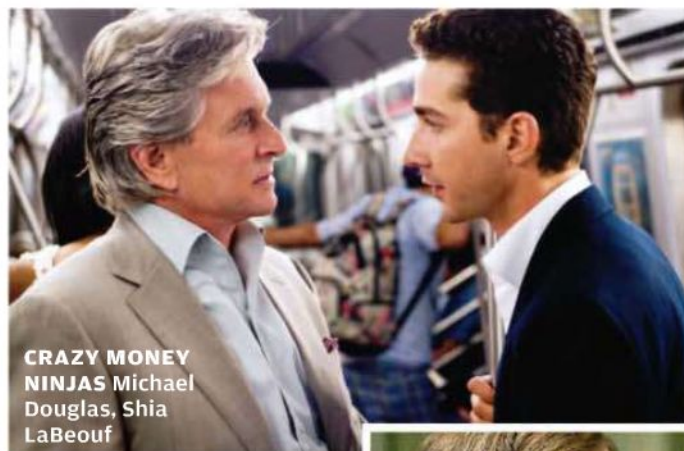
### THE TRAVERS TAKE

Peter Travers looks back at more movies that defined a generation: [rollingstone.com/travers](http://rollingstone.com/travers).



You expect him to nail Sean's charming hustle, and he does, working a restaurant meeting with Mark and Eduardo like a twentysomething Dr. Evil. "A million dollars isn't cool," he says. "You know what's cool? A billion dollars." Sean, with a rep for drugs and very young women, sinks his hooks in. He's a seductive Iago to Mark's ego-bruised Othello. It's a role to die for, and Timberlake the mesmerizer just crushes it.

Note to Oscar: You need to step up big time for Garfield, who plays Eduardo with a vulnerability that raises the emotional stakes in a movie that is built on ice cool, a fact reflected in the haunting visuals achieved digitally by gifted cinematographer Jeff Cronenweth and the hypnotic musical road map laid out by Trent Reznor and Atticus Ross. Was Mark jealous that the Harvard final club that rejected him accepted Eduardo? Keep your eyes on Garfield—he's shatteringly good, the soul of a film that might otherwise be without one. *The Social Network* is the movie of the year. But Fincher and Sorkin triumph by taking it further. Lacing their scathing wit with an aching sadness, they define the dark irony of the past decade. The final image of solitary Mark at his computer has to resonate for a generation of users (the drug term seems apt) sitting in front of a glowing screen pretending not to be alone.



**CRAZY MONEY NINJAS** Michael Douglas, Shia LaBeouf

## Wall Street: Money Never Sleeps ★★½

Michael Douglas  
Directed by Oliver Stone

GORDON GEKKO IS BACK, baby, and Michael Douglas plays the hell out of him. That's the good news. Everything else in Oliver Stone's sequel to the original *Wall Street*, the 1987 movie that won Douglas an Oscar and cultural immortality, smacks of moral rectitude. Where's the pleasure in that? Gekko's high-rolling mantra of "greed is good" didn't make him a role model. It made him a glam symbol of what financial corruption could buy you. While the other wolves of Wall Street snuck around, Gekko flaunted it. He was sin incarnate, a villain you had to love. The sequel picks up with Gekko getting out of jail for insider trading and into a world where



**VAMPIRE GIRL** Chloë Grace Moretz

the banks make him look like a piker. We get it. We get how wrong it is for young market trader Jake Moore (Shia LaBeouf) to choose Gekko as a mentor. Jake should be listening to Gekko's estranged daughter, Winnie (the wondrous Carey Mulligan stuck in scold mold), who wears Jake's engagement ring and runs a lefty blog. He should persuade his mom (Susan Sarandon, with a yenta accent) to reject nasty real estate and go back to nursing. He should invest in clean energy. Blah, blah,

blah. Stone used to know in his gut that a sermon belongs in the pulpit, not the multiplex. No more. Even Douglas and Josh Brolin, in a juicy turn as a gladiator of the New Economy, can't save an ending that drips sentiment. Maybe money never sleeps, but this missed opportunity of a movie will have audiences dozing.

## Let Me In ★★★

Chloë Grace Moretz  
Directed by Matt Reeves

I THOUGHT FOR SURE THAT any Hollywood remake of Tomas Alfredson's artful Swedish vampire film, *Let the Right One In*, would be a crass desecration. Well, color me blushing. Director Matt Reeves (*Cloverfield*) proves expert at tracing Alfredson's footsteps, creating a mood of chilling terror even while moving the setting from Stockholm to 1980s New Mexico with Reagan raising fears about the Evil Empire. Better yet, Reeves plugs in a live wire to play Abby, the girl vampire who's been 12 for, well, a very long time. That would be Chloë Grace Moretz, an acting dynamo (see *Kick-Ass*) whose mesmerizing performance goes deep. Abby fascinates her new neighbor, Owen (Kodi Smit-McPhee of *The Road*), a boy victimized at school by bullies. He wants to be fearless like Abby, whose only parental figure is a guardian, played by the great

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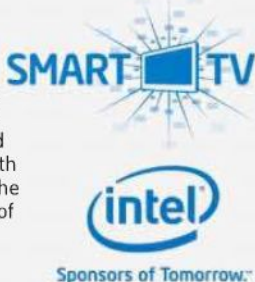
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## MOVIES



GOING INSANE  
Keir Gilchrist,  
Zach Galifianakis

Richard Jenkins. For the sake of newbies to this story, I'll say no more, except there will be blood and surprising tenderness. Moretz and Smit-McPhee will stay with you, especially in a delicate scene where he asks her to be his girl. "I'm not a girl – I'm nothing," she says. Prepare to be wowed. It's a spellbinder.

### Buried ★★

Ryan Reynolds

Directed by Rodrigo Cortés

NINETY MINUTES OF BEING buried alive with Ryan Reynolds: Didn't we all suffer that in *The Proposal*? Look, Reynolds give it his all as an American truck driver in Baghdad taken hostage in a coffin to pay for our capitalist sins. But this is gimmick cinema. And it burned me that he got cell-phone service in a coffin when mine fades in fresh air.

### It's Kind of a Funny Story

★★★

Zach Galifianakis

Directed by Ryan Fleck and Anna Boden

I DON'T BLAME YOU FOR backing off a movie that focuses on a suicidal teen who learns warm life lessons by spending five days in a Brooklyn hospital's psych ward. Stop worrying. *It's Kind of a Funny Story*, based on Ned Vizzini's semiautobiographical novel, breaks the jinx. For

starters, the writer-directors are Ryan Fleck and Anna Boden, who did *Half Nelson* and *Sugar* and rep the best kind of indie cinema, the kind that doesn't sling bullshit. It helps that Keir Gilchrist, who plays Craig, the teen protagonist, is not some puppy-dog kid actor panting for love. Even if he was, he'd get the piss knocked out of him by Zach Galifianakis, who is terrific as Bobby, a patient-mentor. Galifianakis is a comic force of nature (see *The Hangover*, as if you haven't), but he digs down here and delivers a beautifully nuanced performance that gets under your skin. Just like the movie.

### Waiting for "Superman"

★★★★½

Directed by Davis Guggenheim

IT'S WAR! AND THE ENEMY trying to bring down public education in America is within. That's the premise of *Waiting for "Superman,"* an electrifying call to action from Davis Guggenheim, whose *An Inconvenient Truth* won an Oscar. Guggenheim writes his devastating story on the faces of children in New York, L.A. and D.C. whose lives are being ambushed by bureaucracies. This movie isn't just a necessity (listen up, do-nothing politicians) – it might change your future.

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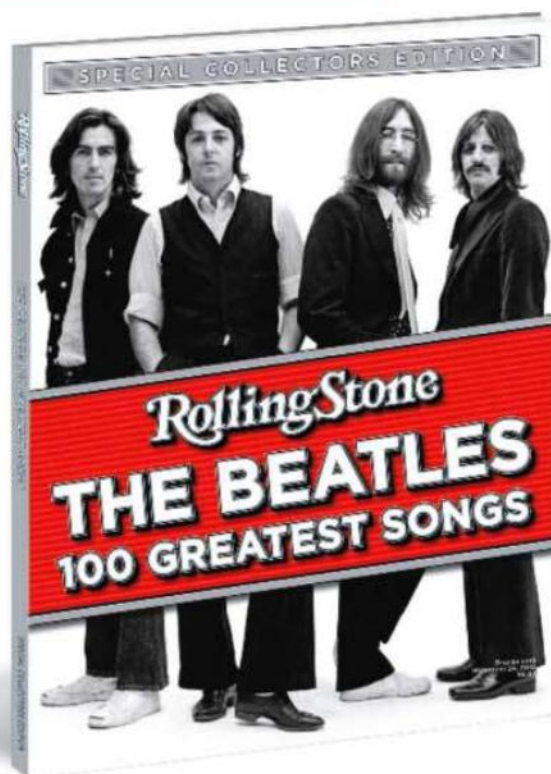


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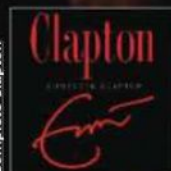
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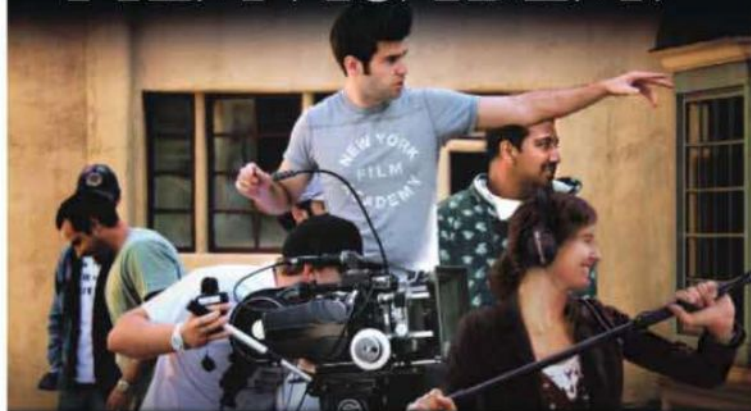
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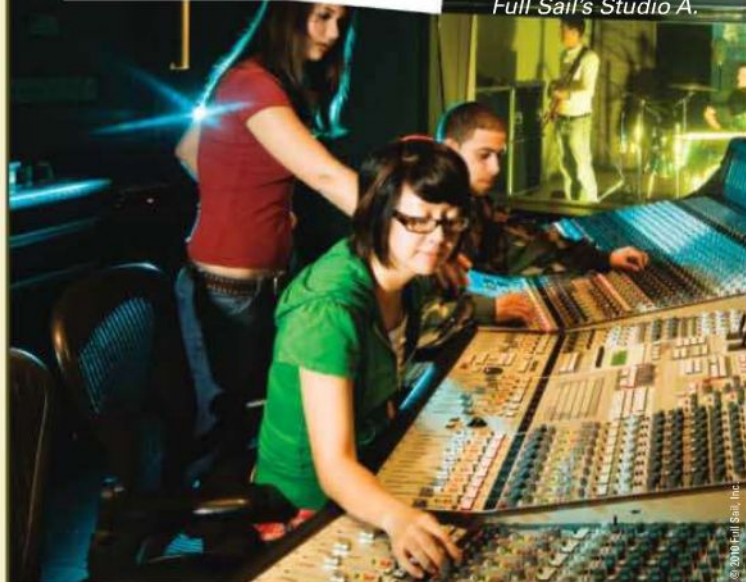
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# CHARTS

## iTunes TOP 10 SONGS

- Rihanna**  
"Only Girl (In the World)" - Def Jam
- Bruno Mars**  
"Just the Way You Are" - Elektra
- Usher**  
"DJ Got Us Fallin' in Love" - LaFace/Jive
- Katy Perry**  
"Teenage Dream" - Capitol
- Nelly**  
"Just a Dream" - Universal Motown
- Far East Movement**  
"Like a G6" - Catch Music Group
- Eminem**  
"Love the Way You Lie" - Aftermath/Interscope
- Flo Rida**  
"Club Can't Handle Me" - Atlantic
- Taio Cruz**  
"Dynamite" - Mercury
- Enrique Iglesias**  
"I Like It" - Universal Republic/  
Universal Music Latino

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## COLLEGE RADIO TOP 10 ALBUMS

- Arcade Fire**  
The Suburbs - Merge
- Best Coast**  
Crazy for You - Mexican Summer
- Of Montreal**  
False Priest - Polyvinyl
- The Walkmen**  
Lisbon - Fat Possum
- Ra Ra Riot**  
The Orchard - Barsuk
- !!!**  
Strange Weather, Isn't It? - Warp
- The Black Angels**  
Phosphene Dream - Blue Horizon
- Eels**  
Tomorrow Morning - E Works
- The Thermals**  
Personal Life - Kill Rock Stars
- Jenny and Johnny**  
I'm Having Fun Now - Warner Bros.



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## From the Vault

RS 718, October 5th, 1995

### TOP 10 SINGLES

- Mariah Carey**  
"Fantasy" - Columbia
- Coolio**  
"Gangsta's Paradise" - MCA Soundtracks
- Michael Jackson**  
"You Are Not Alone" - Epic
- Seal**  
"Kiss From a Rose" - ZTT/Sire
- Janet Jackson**  
"Runaway" - A&M
- TLC**  
"Waterfalls" - LaFace
- Hootie and the Blowfish**  
"Only Wanna Be With You" - Atlantic
- All-4-One**  
"I Can Love You Like That" - Blitz/Atlantic
- Sophie B. Hawkins**  
"As I Lay Me Down" - Columbia
- Luniz**  
"I Got 5 on It" - Noo Trybe



### On the Cover

"I think about Kurt every day, and I miss him. And I realize that I miss him. But at the same time, things keep going. And I've got to make sure that things keep moving for me. I don't know if this band makes anyone else feel better - I just know I have to do it for myself."  
—Dave Grohl

## Top 40 Albums

- Linkin Park**  
A Thousand Suns - Machine Shop
- Trey Songz**  
Passion, Pain & Pleasure - Songbook/Atlantic
- Eminem**  
Recovery - Aftermath/Interscope
- Jamey Johnson**  
The Guitar Song - Mercury Nashville
- Robert Plant**  
Band of Joy - Rounder
- Weezer**  
Hurley - Weezer
- NOW 35**  
Various Artists - Universal/EMI/Sony Music
- Brandon Flowers**  
Flamingo - Island
- Katy Perry**  
Teenage Dream - Capitol
- Justin Bieber**  
My World 2.0 - RBMG/Island
- Disturbed**  
Asylum - Reprise
- Sara Bareilles**  
Kaleidoscope Heart - Epic
- Fantasia**  
Back to Me - J
- Florence and the Machine**  
Lungs - Universal Republic
- Drake**  
Thank Me Later - Young Money/  
Cash Money/Universal
- Usher**  
Versus (EP) - LaFace/Jive
- Lady Gaga**  
The Fame - Streamline/KonLive/  
Cherrytree/Interscope
- Mumford and Sons**  
Sigh No More - Glassnote
- Stone Sour**  
Audio Secrecy - Roadrunner
- Kem**  
Intimacy: Album III - Universal Motown
- Lady Antebellum**  
Need You Now - Capitol Nashville
- NOW That's What I Call Country: Volume 3**  
Various Artists - EMI/Sony Music/Universal
- Camp Rock 2: The Final Jam**  
Soundtrack - Walt Disney
- Sully Erna**  
Avalon - Universal Republic
- Usher**  
Raymond v Raymond - LaFace/Jive
- Rick Ross**  
Teflon Don - Maybach/Slip-N-Slide/Def Jam
- The Walkmen**  
Lisbon - Fat Possum
- Zac Brown Band**  
The Foundation - Roar/Bigger Picture/  
Home Grown/Atlantic
- Kidz Bop Kids**  
Kidz Bop 18 - Razor & Tie
- Avenged Sevenfold**  
Nightmare - Hopeless/Sire
- Glee: The Music**  
Season 1, Volume 3: Showstoppers - 20th Century Fox TV/Columbia
- Ray LaMontagne and the Pariah Dogs**  
God Willin' & the Creek Don't Rise - RCA
- Arcade Fire**  
The Suburbs - Merge
- Of Montreal**  
False Priest - Polyvinyl
- Interpol**  
Interpol - Matador
- Miranda Lambert**  
Revolution - Columbia (Nashville)
- The Black Keys**  
Brothers - Nonesuch
- Grinderman**  
Grinderman 2 - Anti-
- Lyfe Jennings**  
I Still Believe - Jesus Swings
- B.o.B**  
B.o.B Presents: The Adventures of Bobby Ray - Rebel Rock/Grand Hustle/  
Atlantic



### Land of Linkin

Linkin Park's fourth album, co-produced by Rick Rubin, sold 241,000 copies its first week; their 2007 set debuted with more than double that number.



### The Guitar Man

Strong reviews helped Johnson's third album - a double LP divided into black and white halves - sell 63,000 copies its first week out.



### Mood for a Melody

Plant's new covers set is his first Top Five debut since 1982. The LP features songs by Los Lobos, Richard Thompson and Townes Van Zandt.



### Indie Disco Jams

The 10th LP from synth-pop act Of Montreal features guest spots from Solange and Janelle Monáe. It sold 11,000 copies its first week.

00 Chart position on Sept. 22nd, 2010  
00 Chart position on Sept. 15th, 2010  
NEW New Entry  
2ND Re-Entry  
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